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NETHERLORN AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

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HEAD OF LOCH MELFORT, NEAR ARDINSTUR.

NETHERLORN

ARGYLLSHIRE

AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

By

PATRICK H. GILLIES

M.B., F.S.A.Scot.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY

A. SCOTT RANKIN

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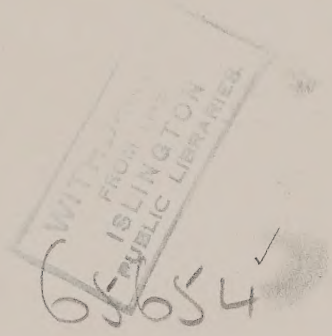

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To the

PEOPLE OF NETHERLORN

THIS DESCRIPTION OF THEIR NATIVE COUNTRY
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

THE district illustrated and described in the following pages is, like many other interesting by-ways in the Highlands, still comparatively unknown. Of its scenes and legends little has been written, and what has been is to be found in scattered fragments through a multitude of books.

In the preparation of this volume, the information contained in the works hereafter mentioned has been freely made use of. The accounts given in *Fordun's Chronicle* (A.D. 1380), *Dean Monro's Description of the Western Isles* (1549), *Martin's Description of the Western Islands* (written about 1695), Pennant's *Tour in Scotland* (1772), and MacCulloch's *Western Isles* (circ. 1819), form a consecutive series of description and observation from the fourteenth century downwards. The earlier spelling of place-names was phonetic, and it is surprising how little, in many hundred years, the pronunciation of those Gaelic words has changed. Many islands mentioned in Monro's book, however, cannot now be identified; and even in MacCulloch's Description, written just ninety years ago, there are two islands, called by him Garveloch-na-skian and Garveloch-na-more, which are not now known by these names. Of the

history much may be gleaned from such books as *Adamnan's Life of St Columba*, edited by Dr Skene from Bishop Reeves' translation; *St Columba*, by the Rev. D. MacGregor of Inverallochy; Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, Gregory's *History of the Western Highlands and Islands*, Dr Dugald Mitchell's *History of the Highlands and Gaelic Scotland; A Memorial History of the Campbells of Melfort*, written by one of the family; Cosmo Innes's *Origines Parochiales*, the *Fasti Ecclesiæ*, and the *Old* and *New Statistical Accounts*. A most interesting book which deals with *Northern Rural Life*, by the author of *Johnnie Gibb of Gushetneuk*, gives an account of the great famine of 1693-1700; while a detailed description of the prehistoric forts of Lorn may be found in Dr Christison's *Early Fortifications in Scotland*.

The Duke of Argyll's *Adventures in Legend*, Lord Archibald Campbell's *Records of Argyll*, and Archibald Brown's *Memorials of Argyllshire*, teem with interesting legends and traditions of the district, and may be read with pleasure.

To Mr Henry Whyte (Fionn), Glasgow, thanks are due for the loan of his father's manuscripts, map, and sketches relating to the history of Easdale.

Notwithstanding the frequent reference to the books alluded to, the greater bulk of the history incorporated in this description of Netherlorn and its neighbourhood was communicated orally by the best informed "seannachies" the district has known in recent years—the late Mr John Clerk, Kilbride, and

FOXES' CAIRN, NEAR SCAMMADAL.

Miss Jane Phillips, Luing. These old stories are gradually, with the increase of English speaking, being lost: it would seem as if they object to being translated from the language of the Bards into prosaic, alien English. At any rate the younger generation of Highlanders takes much less interest in them than its fathers did; and soon what is not written will be irrevocably lost.

These articles appeared originally in the pages of *The Art Journal* (1908): they are now considerably enlarged. The drawings are from the pencil and brush of one who has been happy in knowing thoroughly and lovingly the country he has so well delineated; the chapters are from the "prentice hand" of a country physician with no previous experience of literary work, who has been glad to second the efforts of the artist in the depiction of the characteristic scenery of Netherlorn, and to gather together a little of what a few years ago was an abundant folk-lore. P. H. G.

EASDALE, *October* 1909.

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NETHERLORN
AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

CHAPTER I

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

"Geology may be regarded as the science of landscape: it is to the landscape painter what anatomy is to the historic one or the sculptor. . . . Landscapes are tablets roughened with the records of the past; and the various features, whether of hill or valley, terrace or escarpment, form the bold and graceful characters in which the narrative is inscribed."—HUGH MILLER.

IT may appear a truism to say that the geological structure and history of a country are responsible for its scenery; but it is not so long ago since it was recognised that the present features of the land are due, not to the powers of subterranean convulsions of nature which were supposed to have reared the hills on high, and cleft open the valleys, but to the simple denuding agencies of air, rain, and frost; agencies which grind slowly, persistent and ruthless, more mighty in their effects than the greatest cataclysms of which history relates. While of course we recognise the great earth move-

ments, which in the ages have alternately raised and submerged the land, plicating and crumpling the strata and giving the general trend to the surface; it is to these simple agencies, acting upon the lines of least resistance, taking advantage of the peculiarities of fault and structure, that the diverse details of the land which constitute its scenic features are due. The picturesque mountain chains of the Highlands are but the relics of denudation; they have been sculptured out of a huge tableland by the erosion of the valleys; the process is still going on, and will go on until a "base level" is reached, when again a new series of rocks composed of the ruins of the old may be upreared, to be subjected to the same ceaseless waste, and a new configuration be given to the surface of the land.

From the varied resistance to erosion presented by different natures of rock, we find each rock formation having a distinct type of scenery. Thus in quartzite regions the hills assume conical forms — the paps or "ciche" of so many districts; while the riven peaks or "stuc" of schist, and hummocky ridges of slate, and the precipitous hills or "bidean" of basalt, are familiar features of the places where these rocks predominate. Again, the character of the underlying strata has its influence upon the vegetation which clothes the surface; from the grassy covering of basalt or limestone regions, the rugged and heathery slopes of gneiss, to the sterile bare peaks of quartzite.

THE POST OFFICE, FORD, LOCH AWE.

We would expect therefore that where different geological formations succeed or alternate quickly in a comparatively small area, the scenery would be of an agreeably diversified nature.

Now from the shores of Jura and Scarba to the waters of Loch Awe—a region embracing the district of Netherlorn —an interesting sequence of the old metamorphic rocks of the Highlands appears. On the west we find a great mountain chain of quartzite, rising in Beinn-an-oir, one of the Jura paps, to over 2,500 feet; then great thicknesses of clay slate of perfect cleavage and great hardness constitute the bed rock of the interesting group of slate islands — Seil, Luing, Easdale, Shuna, Torsa, Belnahua, and many others: the slate in its turn passing into the schists and conglomerates of Loch Awe and Kilmartin. These stratified rocks are of immense antiquity: they are pre-Cambrian in geological chronology. Subsequently, in the old Red Sandstone and Tertiary times, there were periods of great volcanic activity, when large sheets of igneous rock overpoured the country, appearing as sills or ledges between the beds, or forcing their way across the strata of the older rocks in the form of dykes or veins of intrusive material, or overlying all in huge thicknesses. Many of the hills of the district are built up of this rock. The terraced declivities show the edges of the sills; while the dykes, easily traceable for many miles, and seldom more than 100 yards apart,

cross the country from south-east to north-west: here, where they are of harder material than the surrounding rock, standing in relief, grey lichen-covered ramparts, locally known as "stac"; there, where they are more easily eroded, leaving picturesque ravines or dark gullies, the "sloc" of Gaelic phraseology. Sometimes we find a "soft" and a "hard" dyke side by side, and then, especially if it so happen on the seashore, where the enormous force of the waves aids the ordinary sub-aërial agencies to more decisive and striking effect, we see "sloc" and "stac," or gully and dyke, magnifying each other's proportions, making a most striking feature in cliff scenery.

To this diversity of structure and consequent diversity in scenery, the landscapes of the district owe their charm. There is no monotony. Mountain, moor, glen and fiord, river and loch blend fitly. The long, narrow and tortuous indentations which pierce and embarb the rough bounds, stretching to the foot of that mountain chain which for ages has been known as Druim Albain (the ridge of Albain, Dorsum Britanniæ), mellow as if by stealth the solemn grandeur of the mountains and valleys: they add the contrast of the ever-changing sea to the "everlasting hills": the freshness and warmth of the ocean penetrate to the heart of the district. The shattered scalps and riven precipices of the summits are succeeded by the heath-covered slopes strewn with grey scars and boulders, which in their turn merge into

STAC ON WEST COAST OF SEIL ISLAND: DYKE AND RAVINE CAUSED BY UNEQUAL EROSION.

broad terraces of grassy alluvium bordering the edge of the fiord and river.

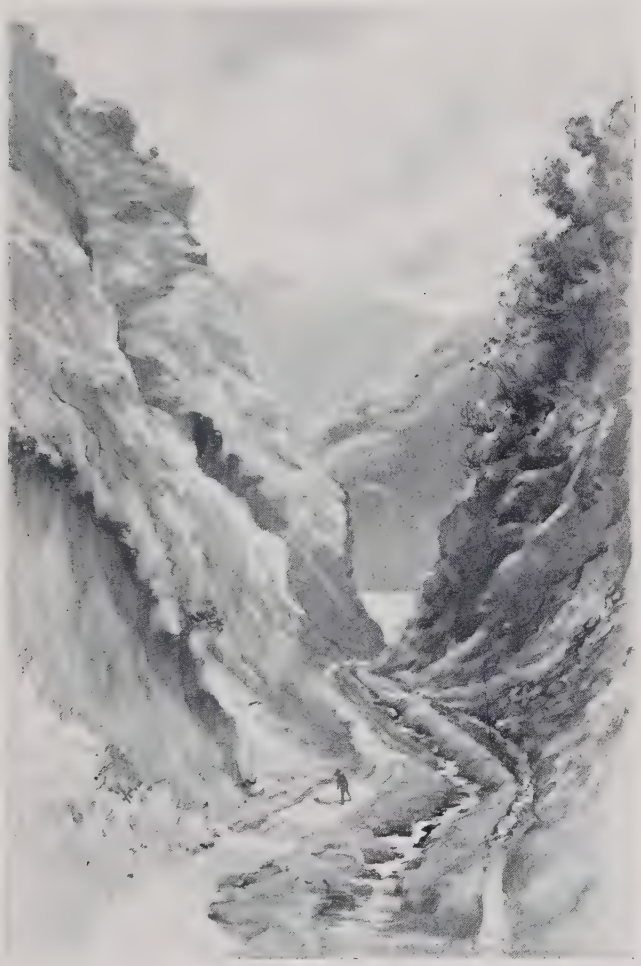
It is related that, during a fear of foreign invasion, instructions were given to the Lord Lieutenants of counties, should a descent by the enemy upon the coast be imminent, the cattle and sheep were to be driven at least 12 miles from the sea; so deeply, however, have these sea lochs been carved into the heart of the country, that it was found that, with the exception of a narrow strip of the Blackmount in the extreme north-east, no part of the large county of Argyll was that distance inland.

Again, the peculiar trend of the coast-line of south-western Argyllshire cannot fail to strike the observer. The long narrow promonteries of land and chains of narrow islands, alternating with valleys and arms of the sea, are arranged in "echelon" of parallel lines passing from north-east to south-west, and this direction has been determined, in the first instance at any rate, by the effects of great earth movements. Some mighty squeezing force passing from the south-east has thrust and thrown the rocks into billows of contorted strata folding towards the north-west, and the valleys have been subsequently cut out by the ordinary processes of sub-aërial denudation along the axes of these plications.

These western sea lochs are true fiords — submerged valleys — portions of the glen which passes down from the

"col" at the watershed or the corrie on the mountain-side to the head of the loch. When the great ice sheet which rounded the hills and ridges left by previous ages of denudation began to disappear, mighty ice streams continuously fed by the snows were left in the valleys. These in their resistless march seawards, carrying along with them sheets of detritus, disrupted the subjacent rocks, pounding them into clay and mud, broadening and deepening the valley. They increased in strength until a point of maximum pressure was reached, where necessarily the power of erosion would be greatest; and so we find the greatest depth in the fiord much nearer the eastern termination at a point where the shadows of the hills still darken the surface, shoaling gradually in its progress westward until, as the loch debouches on to the general coast-line, the lip of the submarine basin appears as a submerged reef or chain of bare skerries. Loch Etive or Loch Craignish are types of such a fiord. At Connel Ferry, the western end of the former, we find the waters at low tide pouring in a surging cascade over the edge of a submarine cliff, so that a rise of a few feet in the level of the coast would convert that splendid sheet of water into a fresh-water lake.

Fiord and glen then are the product of the glacier, and on the hillsides we can trace the mark of its burin, we can tell by the ice scratches the direction of its flow, while the grass-covered moraines, and the tenacious clay which beds the fiords, are further proofs of its once mighty presence.



A PEEP OF LOCH CRAIGNISH.

The Netherlorn country partakes in an eminent degree of this admixture of sea and landscape. It stretches from the foot of mighty Cruachan to the western seas, a broad plateau of land—attaining in Beinn-a-Chapull a height of 1,700 feet, but seldom exceeding 1,000—intersected by ravines and glens, leaving broad ridges of moorland which are continued into the sea in tongue-like promontories or nesses. But while the country lacks the Alpine character of many parts of the Highlands, it gains, in the archipelago of emerald islands which fringe its coasts, a peculiar beauty. Islands,

> "Confusedly hurled,
> The fragments of an earlier world,"

varying in size from 10 square miles downwards, are scattered in profusion all over this part of the Firth of Lorn. Bounding the whole on the south-west, the huge truncated cone of Scarba, seldom without its hood of misty vapour, storms the clouds; while further north, on the fringe of the sea, the grassy slopes of the Holy Islands appear in isolated beauty, guarding the entrance of the Firth of Lorn, the confines of the district in this direction.

The western and north-western aspect of these shores, exposed to the fury of the gales and breakers, is generally rocky and precipitous; in many places the precipices descending sheer into the sea, in others the crag line retreating a hundred yards or so, leaving long stretches of flat raised beach between it and the present shore. These raised beaches

belong to the "twenty-five feet" series, and are a prominent feature of the coast. Along the sides of a defile or "bealach" landslips frequently lay bare the strata and expose traces of a still higher beach, covered with water-worn boulders, and strewn with the shells of the common limpet and other existing species of mollusc.

From these heights the land slopes eastward to the shores of the sea lochs and straits. The declivities are dotted with farm homesteads, while tracts of brilliant green pasture interspersed with thickets of broom and furze pass downwards to the shore, where the absence of heavy seas allows a fringe of turf with a dense coating of stunted grass to maintain a position well below high-water mark. The heads of the promontories are coated with thick coppices of hazel, and the steeper sides towards the heads of the inlets are thickly covered with a natural growth of ash, rowan, thorn, oak, and other indigenous trees. In some of the more inland lochs the scenery is still further varied by the numerous plantations of spruce, fir, and larch, stretching over the lower hummocky hills, along the dark ravines, and high up the acclivities.

The insulous and indented nature of the country is well seen if we ascend one of the higher hills of the island of Seil. Gazing southwards it is possible to determine no less than thirty-two isolated patches of sea. To the stranger it appears a country abounding in fresh-water lakes and tarns;

BEN CRUACHAN FROM BARNACARRIE HILL.

and it is difficult to dispel the illusion, the scene being so devoid of evidences which indicate the proximity of the ocean.

This intricacy of parts—the juxtaposition of mainland, promontory, and island, with their diversified covering, the varied expanses of land-locked ocean, and the sinuosity of the narrow channels which connect these, often in the most unexpected way—creates a series of land- and seascapes of romantic and unrivalled beauty. On a summer day when the waters are still; when the vista of shimmering islands appears stretching away into infinitude, their green colouring fading into the grey mist of the distance; when the steep wooded precipices of the mainland are reflected on a mirror of pellucid azure — a diaphane of crag, copse, and fleecy cloud—we view a scene of that subdued grandeur which arises from the contemplation of the uncertain and infinite; a scene which, as it has nothing of the awesome monotony of mountain scenery, has nothing of the commonplace of the plains. It is scenery which causes the soul to long for deeper contemplation, which we gaze upon with delight, from which we are unwilling to depart.

CHAPTER II

EASDALE

"The target, the dirk, and the claymore, too long abused, were wrested from our hands, and we were bid to learn the arts of peace."—*Pennant's Tour*, vol. i. p. 424.

The little island of Easdale, which lies 8 miles south-west of Oban, is, from an economic point of view, perhaps the most important part of the district. It is the centre of an extensive slate-quarrying industry; and while there are many slate quarries in the neighbourhood, those of Easdale, alike from the quality of the rock, the uniformity of bedding, and the long period during which the works have been carried on, are by far the most famous.

It is impossible to say when Easdale slates were first used as an article of commerce. Dean Monro, who visited the Western Isles in 1549, mentions the neighbouring island of Belnahua as "ane iyllane quharin there is fair skailzie aneuche"; also another island, Sklaitt, probably Eilean-a-beithich, "quherein there is abundance of skailzie to be win"; of Easdale, which he calls Eisdcalfe, he merely refers

EASDALE ISLAND.

to its situation, but makes no mention of the manufacture of "skailzie" or slates. It is said that Caisteal-an-Stalcaire or Stalker Castle in Appin, which was built in the time of James IV., was roofed with Easdale slates; while we know that Ardmaddie Castle in Netherlorn was reroofed with them in 1676. The wood used for roofing this castle was highly resinous pine from the old Caledonian Forest, cut into planks an inch thick, the slates being fastened to the wood by oak pins about 3 inches long. During the centuries which have elapsed since the work was done, little repair has been required; the wood is as fresh and the slates as blue and hard as on the day the roofing was completed. The custom of using wooden pins for attaching the slates continued until quite a recent period.

The long, flat slabs of weathered stone, which are so easily split from detached blocks or the exposed ends of the strata, was doubtless the material from which slates were first manufactured. At a later period, when slate quarrying became a recognised industry — operations were systematically begun about 1626 — wedges of seasoned hard wood were driven into the seams or cracks in the cleavage planes at low tide, the subsequent immersion causing the wood to expand and so disrupt the rock. For long after the introduction of blasting by gunpowder the workings were carried on at the sea-shore, the rock being wrought down to the level of the lowest tides.

The great obstacle in the workings in early times was the difficulty of keeping a quarry "dry," so that when a quarry was sunk at some distance from the shore, a trench or sluice was cut from the working to the sea, the sluice being opened when the tide was low, thus draining the quarry. In this way the richest seams on the island were worked to low-water level, and so confident were the workmen, in those days of primitive hydraulics, that the quarries could not be worked deeper, that a spot is still pointed out where one of them, having succeeded in firing a blast at the water-edge at an exceptionally low state of the tide, exclaimed: "That is the lowest blast which will ever be set off in Easdale."

At this period the slates were conveyed from the quarries to the shipping places in hand- or wheel-barrows. Pennant, who visited the place in 1772, says: "Visit Easdale, the noted slate island: whose length is about half a mile and composed entirely of slate, intersected and in some parts covered with whin-stone, to the thickness of sixteen feet; the stratum of slate is thirty-six, dipping quick S.E. to N.W. In order to be raised it is first blasted with powder; the greater pieces are then divided, carried off in a wheel-barrow, and lastly split into the merchantable sizes, and put on board at the price of twenty shillings per thousand. About two millions and a half are sold annually to England, Norway, Canada, and the West Indies."

SLATE-SPLITTING AND DRESSING.

An interesting account of the island in early days is given in the *Mining Journal* of February 1864, by the late Mr John Whyte, who for many years was manager of the quarries. To it I am indebted for much of the information contained in this article. Speaking of the early days of quarry engineering in Easdale, he goes on to say:—"As different quarries were opened, more powerful and complicated pumping machines were constructed: the first of these was a Newcomen's atmospheric engine, which quite eclipsed the fly-wheel previously in use, and was looked upon by the simple islanders as a perfect wonder. Some parties who witnessed the performance state, however, that it wrought unsatisfactorily, which might have been expected, considering the fact that its boiler was a square box of cast iron 1 inch thick and its piston packed with leather! The next pumping machine was a gin which was put in operation in 1807, and the horse that worked it was the first employed on the island. The gin was found to do well, and others were constructed. Additional horses were required, and this led to the introduction of carts instead of wheel-barrows." About the same time a windmill was erected to raise water, which it continued to do until 1826, when the quarries having attained a depth of 80 feet, more powerful machinery in the form of a steam-engine was introduced. At one time the removal from the quarry of the "rubbish" and dressed slates was effected by manual labour, a zigzag road being left on the side of the

quarry for the purpose; or the dressed material alone was removed, the rubbish being banked behind the workmen as they cut into the rock. In 1836, however, the proprietor of the quarries, the second Marquis of Breadalbane, got Mr Whyte to plan and construct a railway incline worked by horse power. A few years afterwards the horses were dispensed with, the railway machinery being connected with the steam-engine. Perpendicular hoists and aërial tramways have since been introduced, but so simple, safe, and effective was the system of incline then devised, that where possible it is still used.

The quarries until 1841 were in the possession of a private company of which the proprietor was a shareholder; but in that year the Marquis of Breadalbane took over the entire charge of the works. Previously the workmen had been paid wages once a year, and then only for slates actually sold; they were now paid more frequently, and for work actually done. The Marquis died in 1862, and shortly afterwards the works were again let to, and have since been worked by, companies who have met with very varying success.

The output of slates, which was two and a half millions in 1772, rose to five millions in 1794, when over three hundred men were employed. From 1842 until 1862 about one hundred and forty millions of slate of all sizes were made, representing a value of nearly half a million pounds.

EILEAN Á BEITHICH.

In the making of slate the rock is quarried by blasting, gunpowder being the explosive most in use: nitro-compounds are too severe in their action, and shatter much valuable rock. The large blocks thus dislodged are split in the quarry into convenient size, of about 1 inch in thickness. These are raised to the surface and sent to the "banks," or tips, where they are taken in hand by the "splitter," who splits the slabs into the required thickness; his neighbour, the "dresser," cutting the piece to the size and shape of the slate desired. The sizes usually made are known by the names of "undersize," "sizable," "countess," and "duchess," varying from 50 square inches "undersize" measurement to 300 inches for "duchess." The men work in gangs or "crews" of six or seven, and when the rock is of good quality, two or three men quarrying keep four splitting and dressing: a good pair of banks-men can make over a thousand slates daily.

The island of Easdale is separated from the neighbouring large island of Seil by a channel about 150 yards broad. In olden times the centre of the channel was occupied by the small island of Eilean-a-beithich (the island of birches). This island, which was about two acres in extent, has long ago disappeared, not by submergence, but by being excavated into a huge quarry, the rocky shell alone being left. The rubbish and slate refuse were tipped into and filled up the small channel which separated the island from Seil. This quarry was probably the richest ever worked in the

district, from seven million to nine million slates of the best roofing quality having been manufactured annually for many years.

The working of this quarry came to a sudden and disastrous end. In the early morning of the 22nd November 1881, after a very severe gale of south-west wind followed by an exceptionally high tide, a large rocky buttress which supported a sea wall gave way under the excessive pressure of water, and at daybreak the quarry, which had been wrought to a depth of 250 feet below tide level, was found flooded, and two hundred and forty men and boys were thrown out of employment. Since then Easdale has not been prosperous. Lately, however, some of the old workings, abandoned about a century ago on account of the then inadequate machinery, have been reopened, and with sufficient capital and cautious management it is to be hoped that a long period of prosperity may ensue.

Partly upon the made ground filling up the old channel and partly upon a raised beach of slate rock bordering the basaltic precipices of the north-west corner of the island of Seil, we find the little village of Eilean-a-beithich. The importance of the island of Easdale, however, has so completely eclipsed that of the neighbouring district, that to the stranger the combined villages particularly and the whole district generally is known as Easdale. In the Ordnance and other maps the village is called by its old name of Caolas

THE TIDES AT THE MOUTH OF CUAN SOUND.

(Gaelic, a narrow channel or strait), a name reminiscent of the obliterated channel, and still applied by old people.

A very fine view of Easdale is obtained from the coast of Seil near the mouth of Cuan Sound. Looking northward across an expanded foreground of water we see midway the peculiar outline of Easdale—a pyramidal hill, the remains of a broad dyke of basalt flanked by sloping sides of *débris*, the subjacent slate jutting out in a broad, flat selvage of rock upon which the island village has been built. To the right we see the narrow channel of Easdale Harbour, then the village of Eilean-a-beithich nestling below the terraced escarpments and grassy declivities of Dunmore. In the background another and broader expanse of the Firth of Lorn, and then seven miles away the eye scans the long, precipitous coast-line of Mull, stretching from Duart and Crogan on the east, past the bluff headland of Lochbuie, the picturesque, indented shores of Carsaig, famous for its arches and oolite fossil-beds, on to Ardalanish point, beyond which, in the far west, as a streak of grey on the horizon of waters, the outline of the Ross is seen receding and diminishing in perspective: while dominating the whole, the domes and spires of the Morbheanna (great hills) of Mull—Dun-da-ghaoithe (the hill of the two winds), Sgùrrdearg (the red Scaur), Beinn Taladh (the mountain of alluring), An Creachan (The Scallop), Beinn Buidhe (the yellow mountain), and the mighty Beinn Mhor, tower majestically to the skies.

About a mile from Easdale, in a small sequestered amphitheatre of rounded, grassy hills, is the township of Kilbride. It has many interesting associations. The lands were originally church property, but at the Reformation were given to a Patrick MacLachlan, from whom the MacLachlans of Kilbride and Kilchoan, in the same parish of Kilbrandon, were descended. This family was closely associated with the mediæval Catholic church in the Highlands; one member, Farquhar, was penultimate pre-Reformation Bishop of the Isles, while so many had acted as vicars of the church in the parish, that at the confiscation of church property, the lands were given as from a prescriptive right to Patrick, the representative of the family at that time, who had, of course, embraced Reformation principles. In 1591 we find a grant of the same lands of "Kilbride-beg in Seall" to Neil, son of the deceased Patrick, entered in the Register of Privy Seal. In 1629 John MacLachlan, a son of Neil, became minister of Kilbrandon: he died in 1660. His son John, who became minister of the neighbouring parish of Kilninver in 1650, at the Restoration it is not to be wondered at, conformed to Episcopacy, which during the reigns of Charles II. and James II. was the established form of Church government in Scotland. His son, who succeeded him in the same charge in 1685, suffered (1697) as a non-jurant the penalty of "deprivation" under the Acts of 1689 which practically disestablished Prelacy. The family thereafter, for nearly a hundred years,

KILBRIDE.

appears to have devoted one of its members to the service of the Episcopal Church in the parish, the last minister of the persuasion in these days being Mr John MacLachlan, affectionately known as "Maighster Shon," a man beloved and revered in the district for his goodness and kindness of heart, who nevertheless during forty years of faithful ministry is said to have made but one convert to his church. He died in 1789 and is buried below the crypt of the old ruined parish church of Kilbrandon. A large flat slab of stone raised upon pillars, ornately carved with the MacLachlan coat of arms, and bearing a lengthy Latin inscription, marks the family burial-place. A curiously shaped fragment of basalt, resembling a human chin, rests upon the slab. It is known as "Smig mhic Mharcuis" (the chin of MacMarquis). It is popularly believed that this stone, by some supernatural power, revolves upon its axis and points with the chin to a new-made grave, remaining in the same position until a fresh interment takes place. It is also said that should the "chin" be removed from its place on the stone it will always return. Certainly on more than one occasion the stone has been stolen, but sooner or later was found resting in its old position.

The old mansion-house of Kilbride has long since crumbled to ruins; but the garden remains, enclosed by a low turf wall and willow hedge, and paved a foot or so below the surface with large slabs of slate. Many old gardens are so paved,

the idea being to prevent the descent of the tap-root of the apple and other fruit trees into the barren subsoil. An ancient pear tree still sends forth a few green twigs, but the garden is long out of cultivation. In later days the house of Yate, near Kilbride, became the residence of the family, but it, too, is fast becoming ruinous.

One of the most valuable and voluminous collections of ancient Gaelic manuscripts in existence was for generations in the possession of this family. It is believed that the majority of the older MSS. formed originally part of the library of Iona. But the MacLachlans were a scholarly race, and lovers of the language and literature of the Highlands, so that it is likely the collection was the fruit of centuries of intelligent research. These manuscripts, known as the "Kilbride MSS.," are now in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, having been placed there for safe keeping, about the beginning of last century, by Major MacLachlan, of the 55th Foot, who was then proprietor of Kilbride.

In the old churchyard of Kilbrandon there are many interesting memorials. A number of stones with fine carving may be seen. The carving is of the usual Celtic interlaced pattern; usually one, two, or three simple two-cord plaits running the whole length of the stone, the loops of adjacent plaits interlacing, or we may find a central figure or symbol such as a two-handed sword with a simple cord pattern on either side. Sometimes a large and small loop alternate, but we invariably

REMAINS OF KILBRANDON CHURCH AND THE CHIN OF MACMARQUIS.

find the larger loops filled in with a floral or leaf design, such as five obovate leaflets diverging from the apex of a short stalk or stalks, or decompound pinnate leaves with prominent midrib. The usual symbol is a claymore; sometimes a pilgrim's staff or crozier, and on one stone a dagger and pair of scissors or shears. On the west side of the enclosure there is a flat stone which bears the usual emblems of mortality, and round the edge the legend, "Here lyes Margaret Campbell, spous to Robert Grant of Branchell, who died at Obane, the ninth of September 1681." Branchell (Brenchoille) is on Loch Fyne side, of which district Grant was a native. Obane (*ob*—a bay; *an* dim.—a little bay) is Oban Seil, a township in the island of Seil, so called to distinguish it from Oban Lathurna (Oban in Lorn).

Robert Grant was factor or bailie for Lord Neil Campbell of Ardmaddie; he dwelt at Oban Seil, where the trace of the walls of his house may still be seen: a tree still flourishes which at one time was enclosed in his garden, and the well close at hand is known as Tobar Bhailie Ghrannd.

At one time he was sent to Islay to collect some rents due to Lord Neil, and on his passage home, through the Sound of Luing, he was seized by a marauding crew of MacLeans and carried to Duart Castle in Mull, where he was kept prisoner. There being bad blood between Duart and Lord Neil, the latter asked a mutual friend, MacDougall of Dunollie, to intercede with MacLean for the release of

his factor. Dunollie proceeded to Duart, and MacLean, suspecting his errand, ordered Grant to be beheaded. The visitor was received with every courtesy, and his host asked him to delay speaking of business until he had refreshed himself. After dining, Dunollie spoke of the object of his errand, and asked MacLean, as a personal favour, to release Grant. To this request the fierce chieftain made answer: "You may take his body, which is in the courtyard, but I will keep his head." Dunollie made no protest; and probably glad to get away, removed the body, which is buried in the churchyard of Kilbrandon below the stone referred to.

A small, erect slab of red sandstone, bearing the Campbell Arms—1st and 4th Gyronny of eight, 2nd and 3rd a lymphad (*long fada*—a large ship, galley)—marks a burial-place of the Campbells of Calder, a family now represented by the Earl of Cawdor. This branch of the House of Argyll at one time owned the small estate of Balvicar, lying in the east side of the island of Seil. Balvicar (*Baile bhiocair*, the vicar's township) was, previously to the Reformation, Church property, and mention is made of the buildings "of the vicar and the clerk" in the grant of lands in 1591 to the MacLachlans. The founder of the family of Calder was Sir John Campbell, third son of the third Earl of Argyll. Muriel of Cawdor, the heiress and representative of the old Thanes of Cawdor, being left an orphan, became the ward of the Earl,

HOUSE OF YATE.

who determined to marry her to his son. Under pretence of getting the child properly educated he sent an escort of his clansmen, under Campbell of Inverliver, to convey her from Kilravock, where she stayed with her uncle. On the return journey the party had reached the head of Strathnairn, when they descried a strong body of Muriel's kinsmen, who did not like the method adopted of disposing of her fortune, in pursuit. Inverliver sent the girl forward with a small guard to make all speed into Argyllshire; while he faced about to engage the pursuers, stationing a man in the rear with a sheaf of oats wrapped in a plaid as if it were the child. The fight was bitter, and it was at a time when the issue seemed doubtful that the Campbell leader gave utterance to the saying, still used when a person is in distress with no immediate prospect of delivery:—"*'S fada glaodh o' Loch Obha, 's fada cabhair o' Chlann Diune*" ("'Tis a far cry to Loch Awe, and a distant help to Clan Duine"). Clan Duine was the old name of Clan Campbell. When the advanced party had gained sufficient distance, Inverliver retreated, and the heiress was conducted safely to Inveraray. Muriel was married in 1510, and died in 1575. Her grandson, the third Calder, was the victim of a plot, formed by the Earl of Huntly, Campbell of Lochnell, and others, to assassinate the Earl of Moray, Argyll (then a minor), and Campbell of Calder, trustee of the latter. Huntly encompassed his design of killing Moray, the plot against Argyll

miscarried, but Calder was murdered by a shot fired through the window of Knipoch House in Netherlorn, when on his way to visit his estate of Balvicar. The lands of Balvicar were exchanged about 1770 for others in Benderloch.

Below the ruined hill-fort known as "An Tigh mòr" (Temora), about a quarter of a mile from Kilbride smithy, there is a large tumulus of stones. It is told that, during the reign of King William, a succession of cold, tempestuous years had utterly destroyed the harvests; grain and fodder blackened in the fields; ultimately the ground was left untilled, and three years of famine, "the black years of King William," followed. Shell-fish and seaware became the principal articles of diet, and the starving people had the shores parcelled by lot amongst them. To add horror to their misery a plague arose; great numbers perished. The apathetic survivors threw the bodies of the dead into a huge pit, over which this "cairn of remembrance" was erected. The hardship of these distant years is alluded to in the Gaelic proverb still current in the district, *'S cruaidh an t-earrach, 's an cunntar na faochagan* (It is a hard spring in which we have to count the whelks).

In the eastern districts of Scotland the famine was even more severely felt, and "King William's dear years," as they were there called, lasted seven years (1693-1700). A writer of the times says: "Those manifold, unheard-of judgments continued seven years, not always alike, but the seasons, summer and winter, so cold and barren, and the wonted heat

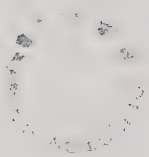
COTTAGE NEAR KILBRIDE.

of the sun so much withholden, that it was discernible upon the cattle, flying fowls, and insects decaying, that seldom a fly or cleg was to be seen; our harvests not in the ordinary months; many shearing in November and December; yea, some in January and February; many contracting their deaths, and losing the use of their feet and hands shearing and working in frost and snow; and, after all, some of it standing still and rotting upon the ground, and much of it for little use either to man or beast, and which had no taste or colour of meal." We further read that "when the means of saving the living and of burying the dead began to fail, natural affection was in a great measure suspended. A man having carried his deceased father upon his back half-way from his home to the churchyard, threw down the corpse at the door of a farmhouse, with these words: 'I can carry my father no farther. For God's sake, bury his body; but if you choose not to take that trouble, you may place it, if you please, on the dyke of your kailyard as a guard against the sheep.'"

Now in King Charles II.'s reign, an Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament prohibiting the importation of meal while the price remained below a certain figure, and cargoes of Irish meal were actually seized off the Argyllshire coast, the barrels staved and the meal thrown into the sea. But in the presence of the famine this obnoxious mode of making the people's food dear and the farmers' trade lucrative was suspended; and not only so, but in 1698 an order in

Council was passed absolutely prohibiting the exportation of grain. These measures helped to alleviate the distress, and probably saved whole parishes from depopulation; and yet so short is man's memory of great calamities that in 1701, a little over a year from the passing of the famine, the odious "protection" measures were re-enacted and orders given that ships seized with imported meal were to become the property of the captors, and the barrels of meal staved and sunk.

A GROUP OF NETHERLORN ISLANDS.



CHAPTER III

THE SLATE ISLANDS: SEIL

"And a record of commotion
Which a thousand ridges yield;
Ridge, and gulf, and distant ocean
Gleaming like a silver shield."
—WORDSWORTH, *Poems of the Imagination.*

THE western shore of the island of Seil, notably the part fringing the lands of Kilbride, presents an excellent example of "raised beach." It is striking on account of its extent and uniformity, and the battlemented character of the precipices, which, 200 yards and more from the present shore-line, rise abruptly from it. Scattered over it we find numerous "pot-holes," polished dykes and boulders, left as they were when the slow elevation of the land had placed them beyond the reach of breaker action. These precipices show natural sections of the strata, and no better place can be found for the study of the geology of slate.

The strata of rock vary in thickness from an inch or less to many feet. The native workmen call the smaller seams "bands," the larger "stones." It requires a considerable amount of practice to detect the line of division between the various

strata, and this line must not be confounded with the cleavage planes; the latter are usually quite apparent, and pass across large tracts of rock quite irrespective of the foldings and contortions which the strata may undergo. The cleavage planes, having been super-induced long after the deposition of the clay which ultimately hardened into slate, have no connection with the bedding. The strike of these planes is exactly parallel to the characteristic indentations of the coast-line, and probably the titanic forces which squeezed or thrust the strata into folds produced a rearrangement of the axes of the particles of the slate at right angles or tangential to the direction of the force.

The strata are seen to be folded in an inverted manner, the arches (anticlines) being bent towards the north-west. To the different parts of these folds the quarrymen have given characteristic names: thus the middle limb, which has a more or less perpendicular but overhanging dip, is called the "beul" (mouth); as the fold turns at the bottom of the trough (syncline) it is called "bonn" (sole); while the ascending limb, which generally approaches the horizontal, is called a "sgreab" (crust).

The inversion of these anticlines explains the peculiar outline of the Slate Islands as viewed from the south-west. The series of parallel ridges which traverse the islands, with steep western sides and sloping declivities to the east, are the remains of the folds; the perpendicular parts of the arches, owing to the cleavage planes and the dip approximating,

THE WESTERN SHORE OF NETHERLORN; RAISED BEACH ON SEIL ISLAND; SCARBA IN THE DISTANCE.

presenting much greater resistance to the powers of erosion than the horizontal folds with intersecting cleavage.

Speaking of the geological characteristics of slate rock, but with special reference to Easdale, Mr Whyte, in his letters already referred to, says:—"It is well known to slate miners that roofing slates are usually distributed in bands through other rocks of a slaty character of little or no economic value, and not infrequently associated with quartzite and limestones more or less impure. In the island of Easdale there are two such seams which may be traced through their various contortions from one end of the island to the other. These seams are made up of different beds varying in thickness from a few inches to many feet; and it may be noticed as an indication of the sedimentary character of these slate rocks that there is a decided difference in the quality of the upper and lower portions of the thicker beds, the former being fine-grained and smooth, and the latter coarse and gritty: a feature which we recognise as analogous to that exhibited by other rocks of sedimentary origin.

"Although the slate-seams are so much contorted as to be found at various angles with the horizon, the cleavage plane invariably maintains an angle of 37° to a vertical line. Where the rock has been least disturbed from the horizontal position it is more easily quarried, and yields better slates. In some instances a space, which must originally have measured several feet, has been compressed into a few inches, and yields an

inferior quality of slate. These 'bands' are from a quarter of an inch to a few inches in thickness, they are harder than the general mass, are much more thickly studded with cubes of iron pyrites, and form a sort of selvage on the slates. In both of the Easdale slate-seams there are beds composed of irregular nodules, half-slate, half-limestone" (the nodules are called "neasgaidean" (boils) by the quarriers). "These are continuous, accompanying the slate in all its undulations; some have a curved cleavage, while the fracture of others is conchoidal. Round the nodules the slate bends like wood round a knot. A well-defined stratum of the character described appears in Easdale and occupies such a position as to justify a division of the slate deposit into an upper and a lower seam, as represented in the section. The slates of Easdale are much affected by what the quarriers call 'cuts' (gearraidhean). These are joints which intersect the strata in a vertical direction. Some are found to extend from the surface to the greatest depth reached, while others pass through a few beds only. The greater number, however, appear to be confined to one stratum. Where the rock is thus divided into lengths of a few feet it is more easily quarried; for, although at the cuts it does not seem to have ever been completely separated, it parts readily in much the same way as a sheet of glass does after it has been run over by the glazier's diamond.

"Faults in the rock are called 'skews' by the quarriers, and not infrequently they are filled with clay, caused by the

THE COBBLERS OF LORN.

attrition of the surfaces in the process of displacement. They are very injurious, and render the rock coarse and friable in their immediate neighbourhood."

Mr Whyte, who was called by James Nicol, Professor of Natural History in Aberdeen University, "the intelligent overseer of the Easdale quarries," was born at Bunawe in 1800, and came to Easdale in 1824, as quarry wright. His general intelligence and steadiness soon gained for him the position of quarry manager, a post he held for over thirty years. He was an excellent mechanic; in the early thirties, for instance, he devised and constructed a small pleasure boat propelled by an Archimedean screw: the boat was used for many years to ferry himself to and fro across the channel. An acute observer of natural phenomena, he became a passable geologist, and his remarks upon the rock features of the Easdale slate-beds are worth preserving as the first succinct and correct appreciation of the geological characteristics of this interesting island; much clearer, for instance, than the lengthy description of Easdale given by Dr MacCulloch in his *Geology of the Western Isles*: indeed the learned doctor seems to have had an imperfect knowledge of this particular rock, and it is doubtful whether he had a clear notion of the difference between slaty cleavage and stratification. Mr Whyte left Easdale in 1863, became manager for the Earl of Mansfield of Logiealmond Slate Quarries, and died at Methven in Perthshire in 1885.

Reference has already been made to the numerous trap dykes which intrude here and there among the slate. One series runs between the seams, and it might appear that these sheets of igneous rock were contemporaneous with the slate formation, at any rate they do not affect the quality of the adjacent rock very much; but when these dykes cross the beds they render the rock unworkable for many feet on each side, not only from what one may call a contact metamorphism, but from mechanical disruption of the strata. These latter dykes are the bane of slate-quarrying, and have on many occasions caused the abandonment of what otherwise would have been valuable workings.

Interposed occasionally between the strata are seams of dark limestone banded with quartz or calcite. A vein of this material may be seen on the shores of Cuan Sound; it is folded into three large arches; these have been denuded of overlying rock and make a pretty picture.

A large detached tower of rock, capped with the remains of a prehistoric fort, rises from the old beach near its southern termination. It is known as "Caisteal Muici." Dr Christison, in his work upon the "Early Fortifications in Scotland," describes this hill-fort fully, and the description is aided by very striking drawings. The rock is about 60 feet high, quite unapproachable on three sides, with a narrow steep slope of *débris* on the fourth by which access was obtained to the fort. The walls, still in parts about 8 feet high, are built on the

CAISTEAL MUICI.

edge of the steep sides, while a lower work protects the approach.

There are about fifty forts of a similar nature in Lorn, and of that number sixteen are in Netherlorn. They are variously called hill-forts, Danish forts, or duns. Sometimes, on account of the circular or oval forms in which they are invariably built, they are called "curvilinear forts." The popular belief is that they were watch-towers guarding the coast and announcing by fire-signals the approach of an invader; but more than likely they were the abode of predatory chiefs, each with his crew of piratical followers. The sites usually selected were, a rocky eminence precipitous on three sides, a promontory jutting into the sea, or the rounded top or pinnacle of a hill. Their defensive strength was entirely due to the nature of the site, as the buildings generally were of a miserable description. The use of flanking towers, bastions, or outworks was evidently unknown; indeed, few of the later Highland castles possess these, and active defence would be almost as dangerous as the attack. At the most they gave the inmates protection against a sudden assault.

Another of these ancient fortalices is situated at the extreme north end of the "raised beach"; it is known as Dùn Aorain. It was a building of much greater strength and magnitude than Caisteal Muici. Erected upon a bottle-shaped peninsula, the neck of land being strongly fortified, it guarded the mouth of the Caolas at Easdale, a channel

which in olden times would usually have been selected for smaller boats, journeying north and south, to avoid the heavy seas which are seldom absent off Easdale.

The north-west or "back" of Seil presents a magnificent series of sheer precipices and deep cavernous gullies, the resting-place of the raven and the abode of numerous flights of wild pigeon. These precipices flank the huge mass of trap rock which constitutes Dunmore Hill, the highest part of the island. This cap of trap covers the slate, which, disappearing below it at Easdale, reappears at Ardencaple on the north. On the little patches of beach left here and there embaying the land along this rugged shore are to be found outliers of red sandstone, dipping north-west, the last vestiges of that rock on the island. Curious pinnacles and stacs present themselves; one of these, the "Bishop of Lorn," has, when viewed from the sea, a remarkable resemblance to a bishop, habited in his vestments, in the attitude of prayer.

From Ardencaple Point, known in Gaelic as Rudha na Garbhairde (the promontory of the rough heights), a good view of the "Toad of Lorn" (Losgann Lathurnach) may be had. Surveyed from a distance, this curious rock feature appears like a huge frog in a state of watchful repose. It requires little imagination to detect the protuberant eyes and elongated mouth of the "toad ugly and venomous."

The island of Seil is separated from the mainland by Clachan Sound, which to the south widens into a broader

THE BISHOP OF LORN : CURIOUS EFFECTS OF WEATHERING.

expanse of water known as Ardmaddie Loch; while the narrow passage of Cuan (Gaelic *cumhan*, narrow) divides it from the islands of Luing and Torsa.

A true idea of these ocean channels can only be got by boating upon them. At every bend of their sinuous course entertaining and unexpected views are disclosed. Entering Clachan Sound from the north with ebb tide, we are astonished to find a rapid current bearing us along between banks green to the water's edge, and delightfully wooded with ash and birch. High precipices close us in on each side, and were it not for the presence of the long streaming tangle (*Laminaria*) below, we might consider ourselves far from the open sea, borne along by the current of a great river. To aid in the deception we suddenly discover in front of us a large gracefully arched bridge, through which we get a glimpse of a broad lake—Ardmaddie Loch—embosomed in diversified shores; wooded cliffs surmounted by heath-covered rolling uplands on the one side, and the green, fertile shores of Seil on the other.

Clachan Bridge is a single arch of masonry, with a span of 70 feet, and 40 feet above the bed of the channel. It was completed in 1792, from plans by the famous Telford. Vessels of 40 tons burthen may pass through this channel with high tides.

For about a mile south of the bridge the channel remains tortuous. Just at that point where it broadens into the loch

there is a narrow deep bay or *cul-de-sac.* Here, in 1835, a huge whale (probably *Balœna australis*) was killed. The animal having failed to force a passage through the sound, in attempting to turn ran into the creek. The whale measured 78 feet from snout to tail, the lower jaw was 21 feet long, while the flukes measured 18 feet from tip to tip. In August 1837 a school of one hundred and ninety-two Pilot whales (*Globiocephalus melas*) was captured about the same spot: the largest was 26 feet long.

Further down the loch, on the east, we meet with a remarkable dyke of basalt, forming a huge wall 50 feet high and about 5 feet broad, passing from a precipitous rock of schist, right across the old sea-beach for about 100 yards towards the Ardmaddie ferry-pier: the precipice is known as Creag Giullain (*Giullan*, a little boy—a term of endearment). During the Seven Years' War, Major John MacLachlan, the Laird of Kilchoan, served in the American campaigns against the French. While doing outpost duty he was captured by Indians. The savages bound his arms, placed him upon the back of his horse Giullan, tied his hair to a tree, and left him to await a painful death, when the horse should move away. However, the fond and docile animal, obedient to its master's entreaties, remained still, until the Major in some way or another tore himself from the tree. MacLachlan made his way to safety, but was afterwards quite bald, hence he was called in his later days "A' Major maol" (the bald major). He

ARDMADDIE LOCH: AN ARGYLLSHIRE FIORD.

took Giullan home to Kilchoan. Some years later he rented Ardmaddie House and grounds. Giullan was allowed to stray at will over the best pastures, had no work to do, and no one was allowed to interfere with him. As the horse grew old and blind he became a nuisance to the neighbouring crofters and cottars, and to get rid of him with an easy conscience, avoiding blame, they devised the following plan. Tying to the horse's neck a short pole, from the end of which a wisp of fresh hay dangled in front of the animal's nose, they set him straight for the precipice; the horse followed the wisp, with the foregone result that Giullan strayed accidentally over the rock which has since borne his name.

Between many of the islands the channel is very narrow; indeed, it would seem as if some mighty convulsion of nature had thrown what was a long promontory of land into a number of disjointed fragments. Through these straits rush currents of enormous volume and great velocity, on whose surface large bossy ebullitions and deep whirlpools alternate, speeding past as they are borne along by the main stream; while powerful eddies on each side permit the passage at all states of the tide. The boatmen take advantage of these lateral currents to gain a vantage-ground whereby they can traverse the main current safely.

The stream which flows through the Sound of Cuan attains a maximum velocity of 9 miles an hour with spring tides. As it emerges from the gut (*Beul a chuain*) and encounters

the resistance of the body of waters outside a great heaving and rippling is caused, which is further accentuated by the presence of a long submerged reef or spit extending the greater part of the distance across the mouth. With a strong gale of wind against tide the commotion is very great. At such times, the bleak coast, the fiercely turbulent sea with its huge breakers tossed hither and thither shedding spray and spindrift afar, the whistling of the wind up the narrows, and the sullen roar of the stream as it forces its way persistently to the sea, combine to make the scene vividly impressive.

"Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole,
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

"One show'd an iron coast and angry waves,
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall."

—Tennyson, *The Palace of Art.*

COTTAGES AT CUAN FERRY.

CHAPTER IV

THE SLATE ISLANDS: LUING, TORSA, SHUNA

"It is a region as utterly unknown beyond its immediate boundaries as if it had never existed: yet I know of no tract among the Western Islands which, when properly attempted, is more easy of access and which will better repay the labours of those who make tours of mere curiosity, or who are in the pursuit of picturesque beauty. . . . But it is alike unknown and unexpected; and for the usual reason—that every one goes where every one has been before, and nowhere else."—Dr MacCulloch, *Western Isles*, vol. ii. p. 107.

From the higher hills above Cuan Sound a characteristic view is obtained. Below, the receding tide races in its course southwards, but splitting against the shores of Torsa Island, the larger portion is seen sweeping round by the north to join the stream from Clachan Strait, while the smaller branch, passing as a brawling rapid through the narrow channel which separates Luing from Torsa, pours its waters into the main stream two miles further down.

After a placid course of four miles the stream, thus augmented, reinforces off the south end of Luing the great tidal rivers which ebb through the Gulf of Coirebhreacain and the Sound of Luing, to form in their passage southwards the wide expanse of the Sound of Jura.

The speed of the currents in the lateral or tributary narrow passages varies from 4 to $8\frac{1}{2}$ knots an hour; and while in all there is generally an eddy flowing in the contrary direction along the shore, the devious manner and force in which the afferent waters strike the main stream, and the presence of numerous intercepting reefs, skerries, and shoals, produce a perplexing maze of subsidiary currents and eddies which completely baffles the uninitiated, but which the intimate knowledge of the local boatmen makes use of to navigate these waters in safety at all states of the tide and with comparative ease. MacCulloch, who seldom missed an opportunity of gibing Highlanders, their customs and their manners, in speaking of the ordinary Highland boatman, says that nine times out of ten he is neither a boatman nor a seaman, but a bear in a boat, a landsman at sea; that being naturally and essentially a farmer, he is only a boatman by chance, so that if he drives his boat occasionally as he does his plough it is no matter of wonder; but he goes on to say: "There are no better boatmen than the Barra men, whose trade is the sea; and I may say the same of the maritime Argyll men, to whose dexterity and courage I owe many a deep debt."

With flood-tide the process described is reversed, and the currents, flowing north, pour their waters with great violence into the Atlantic. The race and ripple on the flood is quite apparent for some miles from the point of exit.

Encompassed by these ocean rivers, a group of Netherlorn

CLACHAN BRIDGE.

islands—Luing, Torsa, and Shuna—occupies the centre of the view, flanked by the rugged outline of Scarba and Jura on the one side, and the varied coasts of Craignish and Knapdale on the other, with the broad waterway of the Sound of Jura in the offing.

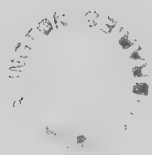
The island of Luing, while deficient in itself of picturesque features, affords, from its comparative flatness and central position, many points of advantage from which magnificent panorama may be surveyed. Roughly, the contour of the island presents two long ridges, with a dark glen between. The glen is known as Dubh-leitir. The word "leitir" in place-names is generally found as a prefix — Letterfinlay, Letterfearn, or simply Letters: it means the "half-land," and is usually applied to a long, steep face of land, the half part of a glen. The fact that these hillsides generally merge below into flats of bog and marshy ground before the gentler acclivity on the opposite side begins has given rise to the fanciful derivation of "Leth tioram, 's leth fliuch" (A half dry and a half wet), the "leitir" being the dry side, or "leth tioram."

The glen had an uncanny reputation in bygone days; it was supposed to be the abode of evil spirits (hence, perhaps, the name, *daoi*, evil), and few would venture to traverse its dark side at night. About midway, a rivulet known as Easan Frogach tumbles down the steep sides, and at the foot encircles a fairy mound. The little hillock is composed of

mould and spongy moss; it was the custom, until quite recently, for each passer-by to pull a thread out of his garments and lay it on the mound as a peace offering. Close by is a broad trap dyke, called Creagan a' Ghlaisrig. The Ghlaisrig was the familiar demon of the glen, and until a few years ago a large boulder, with the imprint of his great clawed hand, lay upon the hillside.

Capping each end of the eastern ridge of the island are the remains of hill-forts. These are very much larger than any other in the district. The north fort is oval-shaped, about 110 feet long by 60 broad; the walls are 16 feet thick at the base, and in places still about 9 feet high. The south, or Leacamor fort is smaller, but in better preservation. At the northern gateway, in the hollow of the walls, the remains of a bar chamber are to be seen; the sides of the chamber were built of small flat stones of slate, so exactly fitted as to leave barely a crevice; from the one end a flight of stone steps led upwards, so that there were probably many similar rooms in the thickness of the walls: the whole enclosed an open courtyard. At the southern doorway two tall pillars of slate, with numerous cup markings, form the door-posts; behind these are deep recesses, into which the bars which closed the door were inserted. The relics of human occupation found in the fort comprised bones of the red deer, roe deer, ox, swine, and grey seal (*Halichœrus gryphus*); the shells

CREAG GIULLAIN, NEAR ARDMADDIE.



of limpets and whelks; bone pins, stone hammers, discs, and querns; and one bronze pin.

The south fort is well worth a visit, not only from its archæological interest, but also as affording from its site a series of those characteristic views which embellish the coast. At the foot of the ridge upon which the fort is built there is a small tarn called Lochan Iliter, whose reed-covered shore is a favourite resort for flocks of mallard. Across the Sound of Luing the bold forms of Scarba and Lunga, with a medley of smaller islands in the north, arrest the gaze; to the north stretch the umber-coloured coasts of Mull, behind which the mountains appear to rise abruptly, clear-cut against the sky, with no suggestion from their insular position of land behind them, giving sublimity to the scene from their quiet majesty and apparent vastness; while the purple uplands of Lorn roll eastwards to culminate in the graceful stateliness of Cruachan.

In a small bay on the north-east of Luing there is an islet known as Sgeir Carnach. Covering its surface are large mounds of stony *débris*, the remains of what one might call a lake dwelling, probably another example of ancient fortification. This ancient structure is almost unique from the fact that, while like other duns it was built of dry masonry, large logs of oak were intercalated at various angles between the courses, probably to bind the loose fabric together. Only one of these logs remains, but many have been removed within

the memory of living people. Dr Christison, in his exhaustive monograph on the subject, mentions only two of this class of buildings as being known in Scotland, one at Burghead in Morayshire, the other at Forgandenny in Perth, and in the former only was timber actually found.

The old parish church of Kilchattan, fast crumbling to ruin, occupies a pleasant site amidst the cultivated fields and rolling downs of the south part of Luing. In the year 1670 John Duncanson and Alexander MacLean, two "outed" ministers, were "indulged" by the Privy Council, and allowed to preach and exercise the functions of the ministry in the parish of Kilchattan. In 1685 Duncanson, who appears to have been the last regular minister of Kilchattan, was liberated on a bond of five hundred merks from the restrictions of the Act of Council which confined the indulged ministers within the district to which they were appointed; but three days afterwards his bond was declared forfeited, and he himself "put to the horn" on a baseless charge of contempt of the King's authority. He died in prison at Campbeltown on the 29th September 1687: he is said to have been a "good man, and useful in his day." Probably the building ceased to be used as a place of public worship shortly after the date of Duncanson's incarceration, for in that year (1685) the interior of the church appears to have been used for the first time as a burial-place. The roof, however, did not fall until 1745. A considerable portion of the walls still remains, and

SCARBA, LUNGA, AND SMALLER ISLANDS, FROM CULLIPOOL HILL.

the west gable is entire, but the building appears to have been very plain and devoid of ornament.

In the churchyard there are few stones of interest. Two small fragments of carved slate may be seen: one of these, broken across the middle, shows the indistinct outline of a two-handed sword; the other fragment belonged to what was a fine piece of carving, the tracery being as distinct as it was when cut. The earlier members of the family of the MacLeans of Shuna are buried in Kilchattan, the date of the first interment being 1687, that is, eight years after they acquired the property. The first of the MacDougall proprietors of Lunga was buried here about one hundred years ago. A stone bearing the MacDougall coat-of-arms—first and fourth, a lion rampant; second and third, a galley, oars in action, sail furled with fire issuant from a cresset at top of mast. This family has since acquired property in Craignish, where their burying-place now is.

Another table of stone marks the last resting-place of Captain Duncan MacDougall, of the 61st (Gloucestershire) Regiment of Foot. He was known in his native country as "An Caiptein Mòr" (The Big Captain). When a lad he joined the 2nd Breadalbane Fencible Regiment, which was raised in 1793. He volunteered, along with many others in the Regiment, for service in Ireland with the 3rd Battalion, which was stationed in that country during its period of embodiment, where it performed the difficult task

of garrisoning a disaffected country with such tact and kindly firmness as to earn the respect of their Irish kinsmen and the praise of the authorities. The 2nd Battalion was reduced in 1798, and Lord Breadalbane presented each soldier with a silver medal, which bears on the obverse the figure of a Highland soldier in the uniform of the corps, and on a scroll the words: "Pro rege et patria dulce periculum." On the reverse there is the following inscription: "Presented to the Volunteers of the 2nd Battalion by their Colonel, the Earl of Breadalbane, in testimony of their gallant conduct in having volunteered their services to Ireland, and to aid in repelling a French force which had invaded the kingdom, 1798." In addition, Lord Breadalbane gave to each of the Netherlorn men who returned a means of livelihood, as a croft, or house and garden. Some of the better educated became schoolmasters, others grieves in the slate quarries. Many of the descendants of these soldiers are still in the district, and in one case the croft then granted remains in the family.

The Captain Mòr received a commission as Ensign in the Cheshire Fencibles in 1797, becoming Ensign in the 32nd (Cornwall) Regiment in 1801, and in the 61st in 1803. In 1809 he was in Portugal with the 1st Battalion. He fought at Talavera, Busaco, Fuentes d'Onor; was present at the siege of Cuidad Rodrigo, at the battles of Salamanca, Nivelle, Nive, Orthez, and Toulouse, and numerous sieges and minor conflicts. He was promoted lieutenant in 1803,

KILCHATTAN CHURCH, LUING.

and captain in 1811. He left the army shortly after the Peace, returning to his native parish, where he rented a farm, on which he died in 1845.

Close to Kilchattan is the old mansion-house of Ardlarach, built in 1787 by Patrick MacDougall, who held a large tack of land in the island. Patrick MacDougall had two sons —Coll and Colin; both served as lieutenants in the 91st Argyllshire Highlanders. They took part in the campaign of Coruña, but Coll, who had turned ill during the advance into Spain, was sent into Portugal to recruit his health, so that he did not return home with his regiment. The officers and men of the 91st who were thus left behind were afterwards formed into a company and placed, with details of other regiments, in what was called the 1st Battalion of Detachments; and although this company, numbering about one hundred men, served in the campaign of Talavera, the regiment — the main body of which did not return to the Peninsula until 1812—does not carry the honour of Talavera on its colours. Shortly before the fight began the Captain Mòr and Lieutenant MacDougall arranged to meet after the battle, but poor Coll was killed on the evening of the 27th July while engaged with his battalion in repulsing the fierce attack which Marshal Victor had launched against the hill forming the key of the British position. At this particular period of the battle the fighting was of the most desperate character, and out of a total of 93, the Company of the 91st

lost 10 killed, 31 wounded, and 20 taken prisoners or missing; a total of 61 of all ranks!

It is said that on that evening his mother, sitting in her room in Ardlarach House, heard the door of her apartment open and close; turning round and seeing nothing, she called her maid, and being satisfied that no one had entered the room, she exclaimed: "I am sorely afraid, Margaret, that something has happened to poor Coll. Coll is no longer alive."

Alexander Campbell, better known by his patronymic, Alasdair MacIain bhain (Alexander, son of fair John), is buried in the north-west corner of the old churchyard. His grave is adorned with numerous memorial slabs, carved by himself some years before his death. One of these stones, inserted on the outside of the boundary wall, bears lengthy testimony to his adherence to the Covenant. Another, the headstone, has the following inscription:—

"SACRED

"It is a marvelous headstone in the eyes of builders, the Lord's doing, also marvelous to most that I digged my grave before I died, as Jacob and Joseph of Arimathea. Israel would not bury evil men with good. Josiah King said, move not the man of God's bones, it's a bed of rest to the righteous, and no rest for the wicked but a prison, and I protest that none go in my grave after me if not have the ernest of spirit to be a child of God, as I am of election sure, of the same principle of pure Presbyterian religion, the covenanted cause of Christ and Church government: adhering to the Confession of Faith, Second Reformation, purity and power of Covenants, and a

AT ACHAFOLLA, LUING.

noble Cloud of Witnesses. Testimonies that Jesus Christ is the head king and governor of the Church, and not mortal man as the king now is.

"MONUMENTAL

"Here lies the corp of Alex. Campbell, who lived in Achadanadure and died on 4th November 1829, aged 78 years. As from the dust I came and to dust return and the spirit to God who gave it. The earth is the Lord's and not pope's earth, nor popish prelacy nor popish Erastianism either, this burial-place I testify that the earth is the Lord's. Also I testify against that heinous sin of doctors and men for lifting the deads out of their graves before the Resurrection. Some men's sins go before to judgement and some after.

"O God, haste the time that popish monuments be destroyed, Haste the time that the Covenants be renued. Away, strange Gods and garments."

On the flat stone covering the grave may be read:—

"I protest that none be buried after me in this grave, which I have dug for myself as Jacob did. Having adhered till death to the whole work of the Second Reformation in Scotland between year 1638 and 1649, and died in full assurance of the heavenly inheritance. ALEX. CAMPBELL."

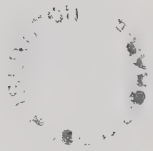
His age and date of death were, of course, inserted afterwards.

Campbell, in his day, had a reputation far beyond the bounds of his native island. He was the leader of a secession from the Established Presbyterian Church of the parish which took place in 1787. The occasion was the presentation of a minister to the living, and the seceders seized the opportunity to protest against the intrusion of an "Erastian," and to form a congregation of their own. The history of the "Covenanters

of Lorn," as they were called, closely imitates in its process of development and decay that of the more celebrated body, whose title they adopted.

The Cameronians, Covenanters, or Remonstrants, as they were styled at different periods, were men whose zeal and honesty of purpose cannot be questioned. Their dream was of a covenanted kingdom: a theocracy, the prototype of which was the Kingdom of Israel. "They took their creed from the New Testament, but their associations and their religious revellings were all in the Old; they coldly adopted the one as a formal test, but their souls yearned after the older dispensation as a practical embodiment of their own proud, fierce, and exclusive tempers." Their ruling principle was that they alone professed the true religion, and that all not of their communion were doomed to perdition. They took their rise in the movement which in Charles I.'s reign embraced the whole of the Lowlands and part of the Highlands of Scotland, when noble and peasant elbowed each other in their haste to sign the National Covenant. They were the extreme party of that movement: the Remonstrants at Dunbar. And extreme they remained. When the revulsion caused by the cavalier treatment of Scottish notions of independence during the Commonwealth found expression in the exorbitant licence of the Restoration, their influence and numbers rapidly dwindled. Persecution, notwithstanding the fact that they themselves were fighting for freedom, made them the most

LOCHAN ILITER AND PREHISTORIC FORT, LUING.



intolerant of sects. They became more and more exclusive; whatever position was taken up there were always some who went a step further, and denounced, excommunicated, and doomed the people they left behind. Papacy and prelacy they abhorred, but their keenest resentment was against those of their own body who preached religious toleration. We find in their literature endless protests against the backsliding of members, groaning and sorrow for the ever-increasing body of deserters; and amidst tribulations, fierce joy and exultation that they were the privileged leaven preserved through the dark days, which in good time would leaven the whole and carry the banner of Christ and the Covenant to the ends of the earth. To their intense anger, their claims were not considered by King William's Scottish Government; but their kindly treatment by the king and the lack of the stimulus of persecution gradually softened their rancour, and as a body they soon ceased to exist.

Their history left a deep impression upon the minds of the people; and the dread of Popery, the abhorrence of Prelacy and antagonism to Erastianism had, until the great Disruption of 1843, periodical expression in local schisms. Such a secession was that organised by Alexander Campbell. In *The Dying Testimony of Alexander Campbell*, a work of forty-five closely-printed pages, he tells the story of his life, and of the religious movement in which he was the ruling spirit until his extreme views and narrow intolerance left him the solitary and

embittered exponent. In speaking of his childhood, he says: "In time past I was a cross boy, yet after all it was observed of me that I was not given up to play as other children, for it was observed of me also that when other children would be breaking the Lord's Day in playing, I would be musing, of praising as it were of religion way, and they would in a mocking way say to me, put on the preaching eyes now." He then proceeds to show how he came to see the evils of Scottish Church government; how he came to quarrel with his minister and the parish congregation; how dissensions in the dissenting body arose; and how in his latter days he was alone in his beliefs, "for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and I, even I only, am left." Exulting in this isolation from sympathy, he pours out denunciations and "protests" against everything which did not meet with his approval, and against all—that is, all mankind—who did not agree with his dogmatic opinions. The following extracts from this curious book exemplify what has been said.

"The present Established Church of Scotland is of Popish Erastian principles; and though some of the patronised ministers preach more sound doctrine than others of them, yet they are of the same corrupt principle, and they have a false foundation."

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. So I came

COTTAGE AT LERGIECHONIEMORE.

out from among the Popish Erastianism of the Church of Scotland."

"Since our bearing testimony of protestation against the Erastian Church of Scotland, I was the more and more brought by degrees to the light of the law and the testimony by God's word and spirit, I saw it to be a duty to protest against the Established Church of Scotland, that its principles were false. That as all tolerated sects are false in the principles they hold, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, and although they differed in head from the Erastian Church of Scotland, yet they were joined to it in tail. So therefore I thought I would put in my testimony against hearing any of the tolerated sects, as well as against the Church of Scotland, in case any of us should be ensnared."

"Tho' we are not to hear any minister of the present day, because they are erroneous, and their principles are false and popish, still we have private meetings together as becomes the people of God."

Strife in the little community was brought about by a disagreement upon the momentous question of whether the parish fasts should be held or not; many were agreed that they should, but Alexander held that they should fast independently of "all sectaries," and accordingly "protested." But when the members agreed that it was expedient in certain cases to submit differences to legal arbitration, he withdrew entirely from their communion, and spent the remainder

of his days fulminating protests and testimonies against his whilom associates in particular and the world in general.

These anathematisings are minutely recorded in his curious pamphlet; they show our poor reformer to have been a vain, imperfectly educated man, woefully deficient in the saving grace of charity. Thus he leaves his "dying testimony against those who tolerate all heretical sects, also against the Church of England for using their prayer-book, their worship being idolatrous, also against the Popish Erastian patronising ministers of the Church of Scotland. This is a day of gloominess and thick darkness."

"I, as a dying man, leave my testimony from first to last against the Reformed Presbytery; they are false hypocrites, in principles of adherence to the modern party, who accept of indulgencies inasmuch as that they are allowed to apply to unjust judges." The Reformed Presbytery was the church which he had joined after secession.

"I, as a dying man, leave my testimony against King George the Third for tolerating all denominations in the three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland"; "against the letter learned men that are not taught in the college of Sina and Zion, but in the college of Babylon"; "against them that lift the dead"; against "play actors and pictures"; against "men and women being conformed to the world, and women having habits and vails, headsails as umbrellas"; against "dancing schools, as it is the works of the flesh"; against

BRIDGE OVER THE EUCHAR, NEAR LAGAMORN.

"women that wear Babylonish garments, that are rigged out with stretched-out necks, tinkling as they go"; against "the low country, as they are not kind to strangers"; against "gentlemen"; against "ships that keep their course in spite of weather, that presumptuous sin"—he refers to steamboats; against "fanners"—these win corn in an artificial way and not by the Biblical method of utilising the through draft between opposite doors of the barn; against "men and women to be conformed to the world in having dresses, parasols, vain headsails, as vain children have plaiding on the top of sticks to the wind, that women should become bairns. So that men have whiskers like ruffian soldiers, as wild as Ishmael, not like Christians as Jacob, smooth." Then follows a final blast of denunciation:—"I, as a dying man, leave my testimony against Quakers, Tabernacle folk, Haldians, Independents, Anabaptists, Antiburghers, Burghers, Chappels of Ease, Relief, Roman Catholics, Socenians, Prelacy, Armenians, Deists, Atheists, Universalists, New Jerusalemites, Unitarians, Methodists, Bareans, Glassites, and all sectarians."

Thus lived and died Alexander Campbell, of whom it has been said by an eminent divine of the Church of Scotland (Dr Phin), alluding to the credulity of the people: "What Luther was to the Reformation, that was he to the Free Secession in a wide district of the Highlands." A friendly critic, a leader of the Reformed Presbyterians (Dr Somerville), said: "Sandy is an honest man, but full of spiritual pride."

While the minister of Kilbrandon, against whose presentation he and his followers protested, writes in the *Old Statistical Account*: "There are no sectaries in the parish, except a few, who call themselves Covenanters, whose charity is not very extensive. Charity with them is confined to the household of faith, the members of which they are at no loss to distinguish, and evidently find them to be few."

One other grave may be mentioned, that of Diorbhail Nic a Bhriuthainn (usually translated Dorothy Brown). She was born in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Being a Royalist, she "employed her muse in bitterest satire against the Campbells; indeed there must have been great pungency in her songs, for long after her death one Colin Campbell, a native of Luing, being at a funeral in the same burying-ground where she was laid, trampled on her grave, imprecating curses on her memory. Duncan MacLachlan, of Kilbride, himself a poet, and of whom the translator of Ossian makes honourable mention as a preserver of Gaelic poetry, being present, pulled him off the grave, sent for a gallon of whisky, and had it drunk to her memory on the spot."

The ancient parochial division of Kilchattan, now joined to Kilbrandon to form a united parish, was entirely insular, and, in addition to Luing, included Torsa, Shuna, and a number of smaller uninhabited islands.

Torsa is a pleasant fertile single farm of about 250 acres. It provides excellent pasturage for cattle, and, unlike the

LOCH CRAIGNISH FROM NEAR BARBRECK.

neighbouring islands, almost its entire surface is capable of cultivation. At one time it was the abode of a crofting population of eleven families. The land was let on the old system of "run-rig," and after the lapse of one hundred years the narrow plough ridges, about six feet broad, are quite visible, giving a ribbed appearance to the long slopes of green pasture.

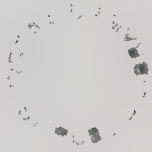
This system of agriculture, by which the ridges of cultivated land belonged alternately to different tenants, and which obtained at one time or other in the country generally, was supposed to be necessary, in an age of war and rapine, to unite the people in the defence of their common property; and so also the houses were clustered together, the little village with the "infield" and "outfield" lands forming the "baile," or township. Each township had its tradesmen, generally a weaver and shoemaker; while an officer or "bailie" was elected to settle disputes connected with land or stock, for we may be sure that the system, while adapted for the purpose of mutual defence, was productive of constant bickering and strife within the community. After the pacification of the Highlands, "run-rig" gradually disappeared, along with the necessity for its maintenance. It was a bad system, as no one would care to improve land which next year would become the property of his neighbour.

At the north end of Torsa, built upon a steep ridge of trap rock, are the ruins of a mediæval Highland fortress: it

is called Caisteal nan Con (the Dogs' Castle). It is supposed to have been a hunting-seat of the Lords of the Isles; but more than likely the name is derived from a sobriquet often applied by their enemies to the powerful Clan MacLean—Clann Illeathain nan Con; and although Pennant, MacCulloch and others state that the castle belonged to the MacDonalds, tradition clearly relates that it was built by the MacLeans, who, during the sixteenth century at least, held the lands of Luing, Shuna, and Torsa in feu from the Earl of Argyll. The castle displays the remains of two square towers, with a circular work at one corner. The walls are neatly fitted into the crevices of the rock upon which the castle stands, so that they form one continuous scarp, making an attack by escalade impossible.

The island of Shuna lies midway betwixt Luing and Craignish. About three miles long and less than two broad, it presents a surface of less fertility and verdure than the neighbouring isles, but beautifully variegated with copses of natural wood. Numerous rivulets course down its brown sides, the position of each being indicated by meandering lines of birch and hazel which thickly clothe the depressions; while here and there on the less fertile areas of soil, clumps of the same species of tree dot the landscape. The whole, arranged with Nature's careless freedom and grace, presents the appearance of ornamental policies—only, as has been said, "man never did anything half so well."

CAISTEAL NAN CON (THE DOGS' CASTLE), ON THE ISLAND OF TORSA.



The island, once the property of the Lords of Lorn, was granted along with other lands in 1321 by King Robert the Bruce to Dugald Campbell, Knight of Lochow, as a reward for faithful services. In 1679 Lord Neil Campbell of Ardmaddie, a son of the eighth Earl of Argyll, granted a charter of the lands to a family of the name of MacLean, probably cadets of Duart, who owned the island until about 1815. It was then sold to Mr James Yates, a Glasgow merchant, who, in 1829, gifted Shuna to the Corporation of Glasgow — whose property it now is — the revenue to be applied for the benefit of certain institutions and the poor of the city.

CHAPTER V

KILBRANDON, ARDMADDIE

"Large are the treasures of oblivion; much more is buried in silence than recorded; and the largest volumes are but epitomes of what has been."
—Sir Thomas Brown.

The mainland portion of the parish of Kilbrandon, consisting of a quadrangular area of land stretching from Clachan Sound to Loch Melfort, comprises the lands of Degnish, Kilchoan, Barnayarrie, and Ardmaddie; but there is evidence to show that at one time it included the lands of Barnacarrie, Duachy, and others lying south of the outlet of Loch Feochan, which now form part of the parish of Kilninver. Thus, on a hill overlooking Clachan Sound, known as Suidhe Bhreanain (the seat of St Brendan), there are the remains of a churchyard called Claodh Bhreanain (the burial-ground of Brendan). In the Aberdeen Breviary it is related that "Saint Brandon having sailed to the west coast of Scotland, fixed his residence on the top of a hill, whose base stretched into the sea, on the spot known as Sedes Brandani, where only one ship could enter." This description may well apply to Suidhe Bhreanain, and the narrow channel which at this place separates the parishes of Kilbrandon and Kilninver.

St Brendan of Clonfert in Galway, so called to distinguish

LOCH MELFORT FROM NEAR ASKNISH.

him from the equally famous St Brendan of Birr, was one of those Twelve Apostles of Ireland who carried out the great work of re-Christianising that country. The influence of St Patrick's teaching had begun to wane, and the faith inculcated by him to decay, when St Finnian, an Irish Pict, trained in the Welsh school of St David, Gildas and Cadoc, returned to his native land and introduced that monastic rule, with its spirit of religious enthusiasm, which made Ireland in the sixth and seventh centuries the chief centre of Christian thought and missionary enterprise in Europe. St Finnian founded the great seminary of Clonard, and here Brendan of Clonfert, Columba, and the remainder of the Twelve, amongst many others, were trained and sent forth in succession to plant their faith, not only in the uttermost parts of Ireland, but in Scotland, England, and the continent of Europe. The story of the wanderings of Brendan, as told in the poem of the *Pilgrimage of St Brendan*, is often called the Christian Odyssey. For seven years he sailed over strange seas and visited the savage lands of Western Alban in quest of "the land of promise of the Saints," and during his dreary pilgrimage he repeatedly visited the Land of Lorn, where his memory is still green in the hearts and lore of the people.

If Columba was the Apostle of Caledonia, Brendan was *par excellence* the Apostle of the Isles. The latter had reached manhood ere the Scots of Ireland had founded the

colony of Dalriada in 498, and was an old man at the time of St Columba's exile from Ireland in 563. As pioneer of the Early Christian movement among the rude tribes of Western Argyll, the period of his missionary activity was spread over the second quarter of the sixth century. In 542 he founded the monastery of Ailech in one of the Garvelloch Isles, and a few years later the church of Kilbrandon. He was patron saint of the parish of that name: his festival day was the 16th of May. His name occurs frequently in the place-names of the district—Dùn Bhreanain, Cille Bhreanain, Culi Bhreanain (the retreat of St Brendan), Suidhe Bhreanain and Geodha Bhreanain (the Creek of St Brendan); while that of his more famous successor St Columba occurs but twice, and then in connection with artificial wells — one, Tobar Choluim Chille, in the island of Lunga, and another of the same name in Eileach a' naoimh, or Holy Island. This fact would indicate that all the prominent natural features had received their Gaelic names before the advent of the great apostle in 563; and that ere that time the colonising and Christianising of the Western seaboard of Argyll was an accomplished fact. The way had been prepared and a strong foothold secured for the coming of St Columba, the purpose of whose mission amongst the Dalriadic Scots was to consolidate the power of the Church and systematise the method of government: a work for which his royal origin and statesman mind eminently fitted him.

DUBH-LOCH AND STANDING STONES.

The worship of stones, fountains, trees and other natural objects, and the mysterious beings which these represented, is as old as mankind itself; and it was this worship and the influence of its ministers—the Magi or Druaidh—which the early missionaries had to combat and subvert. Appropriately enough, at the foot of Suidhe Bhreanain, crowning a low gravel mound on the shores of a little lake known as the Dubh-loch, are the remains of a megalithic circle—vestiges of that ancient cult. Only four of the upright monoliths remain, but the general arrangement may be traced; and we may believe that here in this sequestered spot was the principal idol of the Pagan inhabitants, "the *Cromcruach* and twelve idols of stone around it, and he was God of all the people until the coming of Brendan."

Each monolith is a roughly hexagonal block of basalt, many tons in weight, standing nine feet or more above the surface of the ground; and we cannot but wonder at the mechanical genius and perseverance which the men of that far-off neolithic age must have possessed to wedge the columns from their bed in the trap-dyke, to transport them long distances, and ultimately, by lever, inclined plane and the power of co-operation, to erect them as enduring monuments of their worship and beliefs.

About a quarter of a mile to the east of the circle, in a bleak, bare glen, is a large sheet of fresh water known as Loch Seil, in the middle of which is still to be seen the

foundation of a lake dwelling, rectilinear, and built of square blocks of stone; while to the north tower the basaltic cliffs of Duachy and Ardnahua, crowned by the fantastic Losgann Lathurnach and the remains of a prehistoric fortress. Viewed from the sea, the rock upon which the ruins stand, 600 feet above sea-level, resembles a bastioned fort. It is precipitous on three sides, the scarp being about 60 feet high. The landward side was defended by a wall 250 feet long, drawn across the top of an abrupt slope.

The main road from Oban passes along the side of Loch Seil, and about a mile to the south, at Achnasaul, bifurcates. One branch, turning sharply to the right, passes over Clachan Bridge, then across the island of Seil, to communicate by means of ferries with the islands of Easdale and Luing. The other branch, traversing the steep defile of Bealach-na-cridhe, skirts a wide stretch of swelling braes, known as Na-h-oighean (the maidens), which, while they partake of the treeless aspect common to Highland moors, satisfy the eye by the long, stately procession of purple-coloured undulations mounting to a smooth, clear sky-line in the far distance. Passing along a densely-wooded ravine, the road suddenly opens into a deep recess on the shores of a sea-loch, and here, pleasantly situated at the head of the bay, is Ardmaddie Castle, a seat of the Marquis of Breadalbane. Sheltered on three sides by tree-covered heights, it commands to the south-west a magnificent vista of sea and shore, broadening in the distance

LOCH SEIL FROM SOUTH END.

as the long rays of land—Seil, Luing, and Jura on the one side, and the jutting bold promontories of Degnish, Craignish, and Knapdale on the other—diverge.

Behind the castle are the gardens, and a long flat field called Lon a chuspair. It was here that the retainers practised "cuspaireachd," or archery. Close by the Lon is a pretty waterfall, known as Eas-na-ceardaich, down which the great volumes of water gathered from the Braes above force a noisy passage to the sea.

The dome-shaped mound upon which the castle stands was the site of much earlier buildings than the present. During the fifteenth, sixteenth, and part of the seventeenth centuries the house and broad lands in Netherlorn were the property of the MacDougalls of Reray. This family, the chief cadets of the house of Dunollie, attained during the period referred to a position of considerable power and influence. Their leaders seem to have been men of great ability, and were generally engaged in important service. The marriage of John MacDougall of Reray to Isabel, daughter of Sir John Campbell and Muriel of Calder, inclined the family to support the Argyll Campbells in their schemes of aggrandisement against the MacDonalds of Islay and Kintyre. Thus we find John MacDougall's grandson acting as Argyll's lieutenant against Sir James MacDonald of Islay during the last great struggle of that princely family to maintain the superiority which had in previous centuries earned for its

chiefs the proud title of "Lords of the Isles": and during the same campaign Alexander MacDougall, a brother of Reray, was killed while acting as Constable of the royal castle of Duniveg in Islay.

Notwithstanding frequent marriage alliances with Campbell families, the MacDougalls, during the Civil War, actively supported Montrose and his able coadjutor, Sir Alexander MacDonald. Young MacDougall of Reray, reputed the most handsome soldier in the Royalist army, was one of the few men of note who fell on the victorious side in the sanguinary battle of Inverlochy.

For this defection, the Campbells, who suffered severely during the strife, never forgave the MacDougalls, and seized the first opportunity, which soon presented itself, of revenge. The story is thus told. John Maol MacDougall, the last baron of Reray, was married to a sister of Campbell of Ardkinglass; they lived unhappily together, so that by and by a separation was agreed upon, the wife being allowed a residence at Dunmore, near Easdale. MacDougall being shortly afterwards at a fair held at Kilmore, near Oban, was induced by one of the Campbells of Calder to marry a kinswoman of the latter. The matter being reported to Argyll, MacDougall was prosecuted for bigamy, and failing to pay the enormous fine imposed, his lands were seized by the Earl of Argyll, at that time hereditary Sheriff of Argyll and Justiciar for Argyll and the Western Isles, who bestowed

ARDMADDIE CASTLE (MARQUIS OF BREADALBANE, K.G.).

them in feu upon his second son, Lord Neil Campbell. It is said that the MacDougalls were not evicted without a severe struggle, the old castle withstanding several attacks before being captured. Strange to say, the fate of the family of Reray is unknown; they appear to have sunk into instant and complete obscurity, and at the present day not an acre of land in the district of Netherlorn is possessed by one of the name.

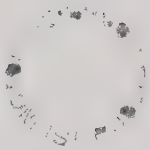
Shortly after entering into possession of the Netherlorn estates, Lord Neil Campbell partially rebuilt Ardmaddie Castle; and a stone, carved with his initials intertwined with those of his wife, Lady Vera Kerr, daughter of the Marquis of Lothian, and bearing the date 1671, is set in the north gable.

Lord Neil, like his father, the Marquis of Argyll and eighth earl, and his brother the ninth earl, was a staunch adherent of the Presbyterian party in Scotland, and shared in the persecution to which that body was subjected during the reigns of Charles II. and James VII. Thus, on 1st August 1684, "that excellent person, Lord Neil Campbell, brother to the noble Earl of Argyll, was cited before the Council for no other cause but that he was the son of the excellent Marquis and brother to the Earl of Argyll. Nothing worthy of death or bonds could be laid to his charge"; but nevertheless we find it ordained that "the clerks of council are warranted to receive caution for

him, under the penalty of five thousand pounds sterling, that he confine himself to Edinburgh, and six miles about, and compear before the council in a charge of six hours." In 1685, after the failure of the miserably planned rising which ended in the capture and execution of the Earl of Argyll, great severity was exercised towards the family and their followers: their names were proscribed, their estates devastated, and, in the words of Woodrow, "to that height of madness did some bigots run, that an act was a-framing to be presented to the parliament for the utter abolishing of the name of Campbell." Lord Neil became a fugitive, ultimately escaping to America; but for two years he is said to have hidden in a deep recess high in the cliffs overhanging the loch, a mile to the north-west of Ardmaddie. The cave is known as "Uamh phubuill" (the cave of the tent), from the fact that, owing to the capacious mouth of the recess, it was necessary to erect a tent or pavilion to obtain shelter from the wind and rain. The opening is effectively screened from observation by a dense growth of hazel and ash along the range of cliffs. The exile did not return until the "killing times" were over, and the Revolution Settlement had established a more enlightened policy and juster system of government.

The hardships and exposure to which Lord Neil was subjected brought on a weak and gouty habit of body, and rendered him liable to a disease not uncommon among the

EAS-NA-CEARDAICH



better living classes of those and other days: he became peculiarly subject to the attacks of what Burns calls "crowling ferlies." Stories about the Morair Niall, as he was called, still linger in the district, and the following bearing upon his bodily affliction is told. A tenant from the island of Luing having duly paid his rent was surprised to get notice some time afterwards that he was in arrears. Receipts not being customary at a time when the small holder's possession depended upon the whim of the tacksman or landlord, the tenant proceeded to the castle, where he saw the laird and tried to remind him of the payment. The farmer's statement was likely to receive no credit, when he interjected: "*Nach eil cuimhne agaibh a Mhorair air an latha a thug mi miall thar ar cota?*" ("Do you not remember, my lord, that day upon which I took a louse from your coat?") Lord Neil became confused, but, remembering the incident, replied: "*Companach mial an righ, ach companach coin deargan. Seadh! seadh! mo laochan phaidh thu mall ceart gu leoir. Bi falbh, bi falbh.*" ("The flea may be the companion of dogs, but the louse is the companion of kings. Yes, yes, my little man, you paid your rent right enough. Go away, go away.") His trouble became so vexatious, however, that, consulting a wise woman who resided near by, he was told that it was caused by the presence of a certain plant — the ribwort (*slanlus*) — which grew in great abundance near the castle; and, as he considered it impossible

to eradicate the root, he determined to dispose of the estates. They were accordingly sold about 1692 to John, first Earl of Breadalbane, for a sum, it is said, of twenty thousand pounds. The Earl of Argyll was furious when he heard of the transaction, and refused to accept any portion of the money, which, tradition relates, remains in the Sheriff Court of Inveraray until this day.

For the greater part of the eighteenth century Ardmaddie was the residence of the factor for the Argyllshire portion of the Breadalbane property; but the first Marquis, having been born there while his father, Colin Campbell of Carwhin, was Commissioner upon the estate, made it his favourite seat when he succeeded to the earldom. His son, the second Marquis, planned vast improvements to the house and surroundings, but died before the work was well-nigh begun. The present noble representative of the house of Breadalbane completed the building as it at present stands, adding a large wing with decorated towers and handsome elevation; so that the house, although not a large one, is in perfect proportion to its surroundings.

THE HOLY ISLANDS.

CHAPTER VI

THE HOLY ISLANDS

"A characteristic still more distinctive of the Irish monks, as of all their nation, was the imperious necessity of spreading themselves without, of seeking or carrying knowledge and faith afar, and of penetrating into the most distant regions to watch or combat paganism."—MONTALEMBERT, *Monks of the West.*

ABOUT five miles south-west of Easdale is a group of islands called the Garvelloch or Holy Islands. They form a chain about three miles long, and are individually known as Dùn Chonail (once a royal fortress), Garbheileach, Culi-Bhreanain and Eileach a' Naoimh. The exact meaning of the word Eileach, in Eileach a' Naoimh and in Garbheileach has given rise to much difference of opinion. With regard to the latter place-name it is pronounced locally Garbh-bhileach, that is, "rough-lipped" or "edged," and the name so rendered is descriptive, but this may be a modified Garbheileach, as in Eileach a' Naoimh. Eileach, or more properly Aileach, is variously translated as a "mound" or "stony place," and is certainly connected with the obsolete word *Al*, a stone. So that the "rough stony mound" would be appropriate enough when applied to the rugged contour of Garvelloch. Similarly, Eileach a' Naoimh would mean the

"stony mound" or "heap of the saint," or if the terminal word is an adjective—Eileacha Naomh—the "holy mounds."

Skene, Reeves, and others, have fallen into the usual error of considering Aileach a corruption of Eilean, an island. This it certainly is not. Skene quotes Fordun, who wrote about the end of the fourteenth century, saying: — "The earliest notice of these islands is by Fordun. Insula Helant Leneow, scilicet insula sanctorum, et ubi refugium. Insula Garveleane, juxta magnum castrum de Donquhoule, distans ab aliis insulis sex milliaribus in oceano"; and goes on to say, "The rendering of Helant Leneow by 'Insula Sanctorum' shows that the name in Fordun's day was not Eilean Naomh, or Holy Island, as it is usually called, but Eilean na Naoimh, or the Island of the Saints, and it is so called still by the Gaelic-speaking people of the neighbourhood; while Garvelloch appears under the older form of Garbheilean; but those names had passed into their present corrupted form as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, for in 1629, Archibald Campbell of Kilmelfort resigns to Archibald, Lord Lorne, the islands of Garvelach and Dunchonill, and in 1630 Andrew, Bishop of Raphoe and prior of Oransay, grants to John Campbell, Rector of Craigness, the isles of Ilachinive and Kilbrandon" (Kilbrandon is not the parish of the name, but Culi Bhreanain, one of the Garvelloch group). Now the Gaelic-speaking people of the district never do say Eilean na Naoimh, but Eileach a' Naoimh. Fordun was a foreigner, and probably

DÙN CHONAIL.

had not visited the islands; and we might as well believe his statement regarding Scarba, which he says is fifteen miles long, whereas it is only three!

Dean Monro calls these islands Eluch na naose and Garowhellach.

In the monkish chronicle *Vita Brendani*, the following passage occurs:—"Et in alio regione in Britannia, monasterium nomine Ailech, sanctissimus Brendanus fundavit." In the Brussels edition of the same work, it is stated more explicitly that the monastery was founded in the *island* of Ailech, "unum monasterium in insula Ailech, alterum in Terra Ethica." Terra Ethica is Tiree, and there can be no reasonable doubt that Ailech is Eileach a' Naoimh. St Columba was not by any means the first Christian missionary to these isles. St Bridget or Bride, who died in 525, was probably an early visitor; and St Brendan, who died at a great age in 577, had, we know, frequently visited these islands before the middle of the century. We may place the foundation of the monastery of Ailech at about 542.

Of the Holy Islands, then, Eileach a' Naoimh, containing as it does the ruins of a monastic establishment of Columban or pre-Columban days, probably the oldest vestiges of the sort standing in Scotland, is by far the most interesting. It was Dr MacCulloch, in his description of the Western Isles, who drew the attention of the outside world to this beautiful spot, and the description of his visit is worth quoting. "On

traversing Ilachanu I was surprised at the singularity and beauty of a spot which seemed at a distance to be a bare hill, and of which, even from the creek where our boat was drawn up, no conjecture could have been formed. Surmounting one ridge after another, a succession of secluded valleys appeared, which, although without other wood than a few scattered bushes, were beautifully disposed, and were rendered interesting no less by their silence and seclusion than by the intermixture of rock and green pasture, among which were wandering the cattle of the adjoining farm of Garvelloch. It was impossible to imagine that we were here on a narrow spot surrounded by a wild sea, and far remote from the land; no sounds of winds or waves, nor sight of water interfering with the tranquillity and retirement of scenes which made us forget that the boisterous ocean was breaking all around.

"While I was amusing myself with imagining a hermit here retired from the world and its cares, I came, most unexpectedly, on a heap of ruins accompanied by characters which left no doubt of their original design. I had no great cause for surprise perhaps, after my experience at Inch Cormac, to find that no account of this establishment should exist either in the legendary or antiquarian lore of Scotland. It had not even been mentioned to us in the islands which we had left; and appeared, indeed, utterly unknown except to the tenant, who did not seem to think much of anything

CHAPEL, MONASTERY, AND PORT, EILEACH Á NAOIMH.

but his farm, and to the very few fishermen who occasionally touched at this place.

"The ruins of that which must have formed the monastery are sufficiently extensive to show that the establishment must have been considerable; at a small distance from these ruins was the burying-ground, containing many ornamental stones, with remains of crosses—apparently votive, as most of those in Iona probably were. On some of the tombs are carved the usual objects: ships, arms, and the cognizances of MacDonalds, MacLeans, and MacKinnons. But all is quiet about their graves, and the turbulent chiefs now sleep below, in that peace which, when living, they never knew."

MacCulloch's description of the scenery is very true. I know of no sweeter spot: its verdant slopes and grassy hollows, its miniature glens and rippling burns give it the character of a secluded country retreat; while its deep goes, cruel skerries, and resounding sea-caves truly proclaim its maritime nature.

The principal constituent rock of the island, owing to a large admixture of calcareous material, weathers very unequally, resulting in many curious and fantastic shapes. One peculiar effect is to be noted at the north of the island, where a magnificent arch many feet in height has been left abutting the face of a cliff. The arch has a striking resemblance to a harp, and has consequently received its Gaelic title, A' chlarsach. Close to the ecclesiastical buildings another peculiar

effect is to be seen. Standing isolated in the middle of a small amphitheatre is a large pillar of rock; the bottom part of the column is of reddish stone, and at the base a small seat has been left; while capping the pillar is a perfect canopy of grey stone: the whole makes an excellent pulpit, and it is therefore known as A'chrannag. Local tradition speaks of it as having been used as such by no less a personage than Columchille.

The same unequal erosion has produced in the coast-line long, narrow creeks or goes called "geodha": the names of these are interesting, as showing the association of the island with saints of pre-Columban days. Geodha Bhreanain (St Brendan's creek), Geodha Bhride (St Bride's or Bridget's); while another, Geodha na-h-aithne, may refer to Aethne, the mother of St Columba.

The creek usually selected for landing is called "Am port," and a few yards above there is an excellent well of fresh water, at parts artificially constructed, known as Tobar Choluim Chille. The ascent to the north-west is by a series of parallel sloping ridges, with little fertile valleys between, until the topmost peak of the island, which bears the name of Dùn Bhreanain (St Brendan's hill), a height of 272 feet, is reached. Another eminence lying to the north, and about 160 feet high, is called Carn-na-manich (the cairn of the monks). One other interesting place-name in the Garvelloch group may be mentioned. On the island of Garbheileach there is a very old graveyard known as Claodh Dhubhan (the burying-place

A' CHLARSACH.

of Duban). More than one prince and certainly one king of Alban was called Dubh; and Dubhan seems to have been a common name; while in 927, Dubthach, son of Duban, fourteenth in descent from Conal Gulban the great-grandfather of Columba, became Superior or Co-ärb in Iona.

With regard to the buildings upon Eileach a' Naoimh, Bishop Reeves, who visited the place in 1852 along with Mr W. F. Skene and Cosmo Innes, says:—"The number of remains grouped together on the south-east side of the island are evidence of its early importance as an ecclesiastical establishment, and the simplicity of their structure supports this claim to antiquity."

The chapel is fairly entire, its internal measurements are 21 feet 6 inches by 11 feet 4 inches; the walls are 3 feet thick; the doorway faces the west; while in the opposite wall, facing east, there is a double splayed window contracting from 3 feet to 1 foot 6 inches in the centre of the wall. The other buildings are, a many-chambered house known as the monastery, a large house with a rounded gable sitting on a hill, and oriented like the chapel, and a peculiar building called locally "the oven." The latter has a deep, well-built, oven-like hole, with a fireplace and flue below: it may have been a cooking-house, or more probably a kiln for drying corn.

Some distance from these buildings there are the remains of two beehive cells, connected with one another and forming one building.

Close to the chapel is an underground cell called Am priosan (the prison), and tradition tells very circumstantially the mode of confining prisoners. There was a large stone in the bottom of the cell with a V-shaped depression; the prisoner placed his clasped hands in the hollow, and a wedge-shaped stone was securely fastened down over the palms of the hands, and so tightly that it was impossible to extricate them: the whole arrangement was called, A' ghlas laimh (the hand-lock). Probably, however, the underground cavity was a well, or maybe a cellar for storing the "elements."

MacCulloch speaks of many ornamental stones and crosses. If this be true, then, with the exception of one broken carved stone, all have disappeared; some may be buried, but the majority were undoubtedly stolen. In 1879 the Rev. Dr Hugh MacMillan of Greenock visited the island, and, by probing with an iron rod in the graveyard, discovered lying about two inches below the surface a perfect specimen of an Irish cross miniature in size. The stone was raised and placed at the head of its grave, but within a year it too was gone and no trace could be found. Poor Hinba! perhaps it had been better that it had remained comparatively unknown, for the vandal hands of modern holiday-seekers have done more in half a century to destroy antiquarian remains of an almost unique character than the effects of natural forces extending over a period of fourteen hundred years.

About 200 yards south of the burying-ground, situated

BEEHIVE CELLS AND A' CHRANNAG (PULPIT ROCK), EILEACH Á NAOIMH.

upon a grassy eminence, there is a small cairn with an erect slab of stone at each end of the grave. One of these slabs bears a rudely incised Greek cross. Tradition has tenanted this solitary grave with Aethne, the daughter of Dimma, and mother of St Columba.

The history of the Garvelloch Islands carries us back to the early centuries of the present era, to a time when the misty legends of the heroic age of the Gael were being replaced by the more or less authentic details of written story. And yet, in a country where oral tradition was carefully kept alive by trained reciters, these tales would for centuries be quite as credible as the annals of written history, and perhaps run less risk of being corrupted.

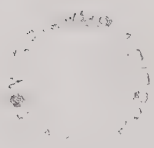
The Western Isles had often been visited by the Gael and Cruithnigh of Ireland before the permanent settlement of Dalriada, and the legend which tells of the doings of the sons of Uisneach is one of the most beautiful in our literature.

Cathbad, a Druid of the Cruithnigh of Ulster, had three daughters: the eldest was the mother of Cuchullin, the second, Albe, was the mother of Naisi (Nathos), Ardan, and Ainle, the three sons of Uisneach, while the third was the mother of Conal Ceatharnach. These young men were sent to Skye to be trained in the art of war. On attaining manhood the children of Uisneach returned to Ireland, and Naisi fell in love with Deirdre, a beautiful girl, the ward of Connchubar, King of Ulster, who was bringing her up in a secluded palace

with the intention of making her his wife. Naisi takes her away by stealth, and, accompanied by his brothers and a chosen band of followers, settles in the district betwixt Loch Etive and Loch Creran in Lorn. Their place of dwelling is still known as Dùn-mhic-Uisneachan: in the guide-books it is called Beregonium. Here they spent a romantic life, straying in their expeditions over central Argyllshire, delighting in the chase and sylvan sports, and glorying in the scenery of a country which Nature has endowed with unstinted hand. But Connchubar, their relentless enemy, determined to be revenged. Making specious promises, he invited them back to Ulster, but they, suspicious of the man whom they had offended, refused to go unless Cuchullin or Conal Ceatharnach, the greatest champions of the age, would ensure their safety. This these warriors refused to do: but Fergus, another hero, agreeing to do so they return to Ireland. On leaving Alban, Deirdre pours forth her regret in impassioned language — *The Lament of Deirdre.* Indeed, as Dr Skene says, "it (the lament) contains such a tender recollection of, and touching allusion to, Highland scenery, that it is hardly possible to suppose that it was not originally composed by a genuine son of Alban." These events happened in the third century.

Dean Monro, in his description of the Hebrides, speaks of Dùnchonail as "ane iyle so namit from Conal Kernache, ane strength, which is alsmeike as to say in Englische, ane

THE GRAVE OF AETHNE.



round castle." The ruins of the "strength" testify to its former importance; the island, the most northerly of the Garvelloch group, presents a practically unclimbable scarp all round, with the exception of a little defile above the landing-place, which was defended by a thick stone curtain. The summit of the rock, about 90 feet above sea-level, shows traces of numerous hut circles, and a deep well. The castle became the abode of powerful chiefs, and was a residence of the early kings of Alban or Dalriada; while it continued to be a royal fortress until at least the fifteenth century, and may be so still, the hereditary keeper of which would be MacLean of Duart, as descended from Lachlan of Duart, who received from Robert III. this royal castle and others to watch and ward for the King.

With the dawn of the sixth century the authentic history of the Gael in Alban begins: the invasion of Southern Argyll, and the founding of the kingdom of Dalriada by the Scots under Fergus, Loärn, and Angus, the sons of Erc, about the year 500, marks an epoch in our history. The narrative, though still garnished with extravagant tales, begins to show a connected sequence.

Fergus mòr Mac Erc was succeeded by his son Domangart, who was succeeded by his son Comgal, who died in 539. These Kings of Dalriada are called in the Annalists Righ Albain (Kings of Alban), and they seem to have quietly and effectually extended their territory until it included the

greater part of old Argyllshire. Comgal was followed on the throne by Gabran, Righ Albain, and his reign was a stormy one. The Cruithnigh of Northern Pictavia, who until then had treated the Scots leniently, were ruled by Brudei, son of Maelchon, a strong man and great statesman. He, foreseeing the dangers of the growing power of Dalriada, went to war with Gabran; and we find the following significant entry in the Annalists under the year 560: — "*Bass Gabrani m. Domangairt R. Albain. Teichedh do Albanchaib ria m. Brudei mc Maelchon R. Cruithnechaib*" ("Death of Gabran, son of Domangart, King of Alban. Flight of the Scots before Brudei, son of Maelchon, King of the Picts").

Conal, son of Comgal and nephew of Gabran, was the next king, and, as showing the low ebb of the fortunes of the Scottish colony, he is called Righ Dalriada, not Righ Albain: king of a colony, not of a nation. But greater misfortunes were to follow, until at the end of Conal's reign the territory of Dalriada was restricted to a portion of Kintyre and some of the neighbouring islands. Now it was, when the fortunes of the kingdom were low and its future appeared dark and hopeless, that Columba and his band of twelve faithful disciples crossed from Scotia (Ireland) to Alban (Scotland). St Columba was of princely race. He was related to Diarmait, the reigning King of Ireland, both being descended from Nial Naoighiallach (Neil of the Nine Hostages), one of the demi-gods of ancient Irish history; his great-grandfather, the son

of Nial, was Conal Gulban, a great warrior and the hero of many West Highland Tales; his mother Aethne, the daughter of Dimma the son of Nave, was of the princely house of Leinster; while through a female alliance he was kin to Conal, the reigning King of Dalriada; and it may have been from a desire to help by his presence and counsel his relation Conal, whose kingdom was then in dire strait, that he passed over to Kintyre, thereafter getting a grant of the island of Ii (Iona). Many facts in the history of the time support this view, and Columba's first monastic settlement is said to have been at the head of Loch Killisport in Knapdale.

But another cause has been assigned for the Saint's self-imposed exile. Adamnan, in his *Life of St Columba*, tells us that "in the second year after the battle of Culedrebina (*Culdreimhne* or *droighneach*, the thorny hollow), and in the forty-second year of his age, St Columba, resolving to seek a foreign country for the love of Christ, sailed from Scotia to Britain." From this it would appear that Adamnan ignores any cause but that of missionary enthusiasm; and yet his reference to the battle of Culdreimhne conveys a suggestion of cause and effect. The story of the events which led up to that great clan fight is, shortly, as follows. St Finnian of Moville (*Magh bile*) had returned from Italy with a very rare and precious copy of part of the Scriptures, nothing less than a copy of St Jerome's edition of the Psalms, and in that Saint's handwriting. St Finnian, for some reason or other, refused

access to the book, which he kept in a room under lock and key. While St Columba was a guest of Finnian's, he, by some means unknown to the latter, got entry to the room, and night after night busily engaged himself in transcribing a copy. St Finnian, upon a certain occasion wishing to consult the manuscript, sent his servant for it, and the man, finding the door of the room barred, peeping through the keyhole, saw St Columba busily at work upon the transcription. It is also told that a pet crane, seeing something glaring through the key-hole, pecked at the eye, wounding it severely. The man ran howling to his master, and Finnian, in a great passion, demanded the copy from Columba. Columba refused, and after a hot quarrel the matter was referred by both to Diarmait, King of Ireland. Columba was the king's kinsman, both being descended from the famous Neil of the Nine Hostages; but, on the other hand, the Saint had reason to dread the arbitration of the stern king, who had sometime before deliberately disregarded the sanctuary afforded by the Saint to a young friend who unwittingly had killed a playmate in a boyish quarrel. Diarmait sent his executioners to St Columba's abode, and they ruthlessly slew the boy before his eyes, despite the protection which St Columba had promised, and which his profession and sanctity should have guaranteed.

When the case of the stolen copy was laid before Diarmait, he pronounced sentence in the oracular words: "*Le gach bo a boinnin, 's le gach leabhar a leabharan*" ("To every cow its

calf, and to every book its booklet"). St Columba, who when aroused had all the fierce passion of his race, delivered the copy; but, bursting from the place of judgment, he flew to his friends, the chiefs of the northern O'Nialls and O'Connells, and these clans, aided by the King of Connaught, whose son it was that Diarmait had slain, fought a great battle against Diarmait and his army at Culdreimhne. The result was a complete victory for St Columba's friends; and the book was regained.

But Columba was seized with remorse. That battle, so disastrous to his enemies, so destructive to his reputation as a saintly monk, and so damaging to his self-respect, was the outcome of Columba's pride and Celtic impetuosity, and shortly thereafter he decided to leave for ever the land of his birth and labours, to go into an unknown and barbarous and hostile country, there to expiate his sin by the conversion of other nations to the Christian religion, by the winning to Christ of as many people as he had caused to be slain in battle. If this story be true it helps to support the tradition of the route chosen for the voyage. It is said that the exiles came first to Oransa; but St Columba, being able to see Ireland therefrom, built a cairn—*Carn cul ri Erin* (Cairn of exile from Ireland)—and set sail for Eileach a' Naoimh. Here he dwelt for some time, but one day, being on the topmost peak of the island, he saw, faintly outlined beyond the western shores of Islay, the bluff form of Malin Head,

so, leaving his uncle Ernan with his mother Aethne, he sailed for Iona, arriving there on Pentecost eve in the year 563. There also he built a *Carn cul ri Erin*, to remind him of the past, and to keep before him the memory of his great sin. His life thereafter was a busy one. He founded monastic establishments in many of the Western Isles; in the Long Island, in Tiree, in charge of which he placed Baithen, his successor in Iona. His follower Donan founded one in Eigg; another was founded in Canna. He visited Inverness and Aberdeen, Christianised Northern Pictland, Brudei, the King, becoming his especial friend. He journeyed to Clydesdale, and spent many days there with Kentigern (St Mungo), the great missionary of the Britons of Strathclyde. These and many details may be found in the old historians, Adamnan, Cumineus, Bede, and others.

While the restless energy of those early Irish evangelists impelled many of them to surrender all the associations of their dear homeland, and travel to strange countries, prepared to give up their life for the furtherance of their faith and Church, some wished for a retreat or hermitage where they could spend their days in solitude, engaged in meditation and prayer. These retreats were called "diseart" (Lat. *desertum*), and perhaps all the great missionaries had a retreat for a temporary withdrawal of this nature. One of the Garvelloch islands is called Culi Bhreanain. Here St Brendan had his "diseart"; his monastery of Ailech was

about a mile distant. St Columba, as we shall see, had such a refuge in Hinba; while we hear of St Cormac, the restless contemporary and fellow-student of Columba, making many and hazardous voyages in his frail "curach" to discover "in oceano desertum." On one occasion, when St Columba visited Brudei, the Pictish king, at Inverness, the King of the Orkneys came to see Brudei. Columba knew that Cormac was at this time sailing round the north of Scotland in his fruitless quest, and knowing the Orcadians to be a savage people, he asked the king, should Cormac arrive, to succour and shelter him. Cormac did arrive, and eventually became the Apostle of the Orkneys, but it is likely that on this occasion St Columba's intercession saved his life.

In Adamnan's *Life of St Columba* frequent mention is made of Hinba (*Insula Hinbinæ*): in one edition of the work, and in Cumin's Life, it is called Himba. This island was a favourite retreat of Columba when he wished to depart for a while from the busy stir of Iona. We read, for instance, that at one time four holy founders of monasteries, Brendan amongst them, came from Scotia to visit St Columba, and found him in Hinba. They all wished, with one consent, that he should consecrate, in their presence, in the church, the holy mysteries of the Eucharist, and during the celebration St Brendan saw a ball of fire like a comet burning very brightly on the head of St Columba, and thus it continued during the consecrating of the holy oblation.

At another time, when the saint was living in Hinba, "the grace of the Holy Ghost was communicated to him abundantly and unspeakably, so that for three days and as many nights, without either eating or drinking, he allowed no one to approach him, and remained in a house which was filled with heavenly brightness."

On the death of Conal the king, the succession reverted to the sons of Gabran. Now Gabran had five sons; and St Columba, who by this time (A.D. 574) had acquired great influence, and seems practically to have had the nomination of a successor, preferred Eoghan to Aidan. We read that while the saint was staying in Hinba he saw in a vision an angel sent to him from heaven bearing a book of glass (*Liber vitreus*), regarding the appointment of kings; the venerable man began to read it, and when reluctant to appoint Aidan, the angel struck him with a scourge, the marks of which remained on his side all his life. The saint then, in obedience to the command, sailed to Iona, and there ordained, as he had been commanded, Aidan to be king.

Again, we find his uncle Ernan, an aged priest, being sent by the saint to preside over the monastery founded some years before in Hinba. We further read of one Virgnous, years after the saint's death, spending his later days on Hinba, in the hermitage of Muirbulcmar. Another story is told relating to the misdeeds of a certain man who

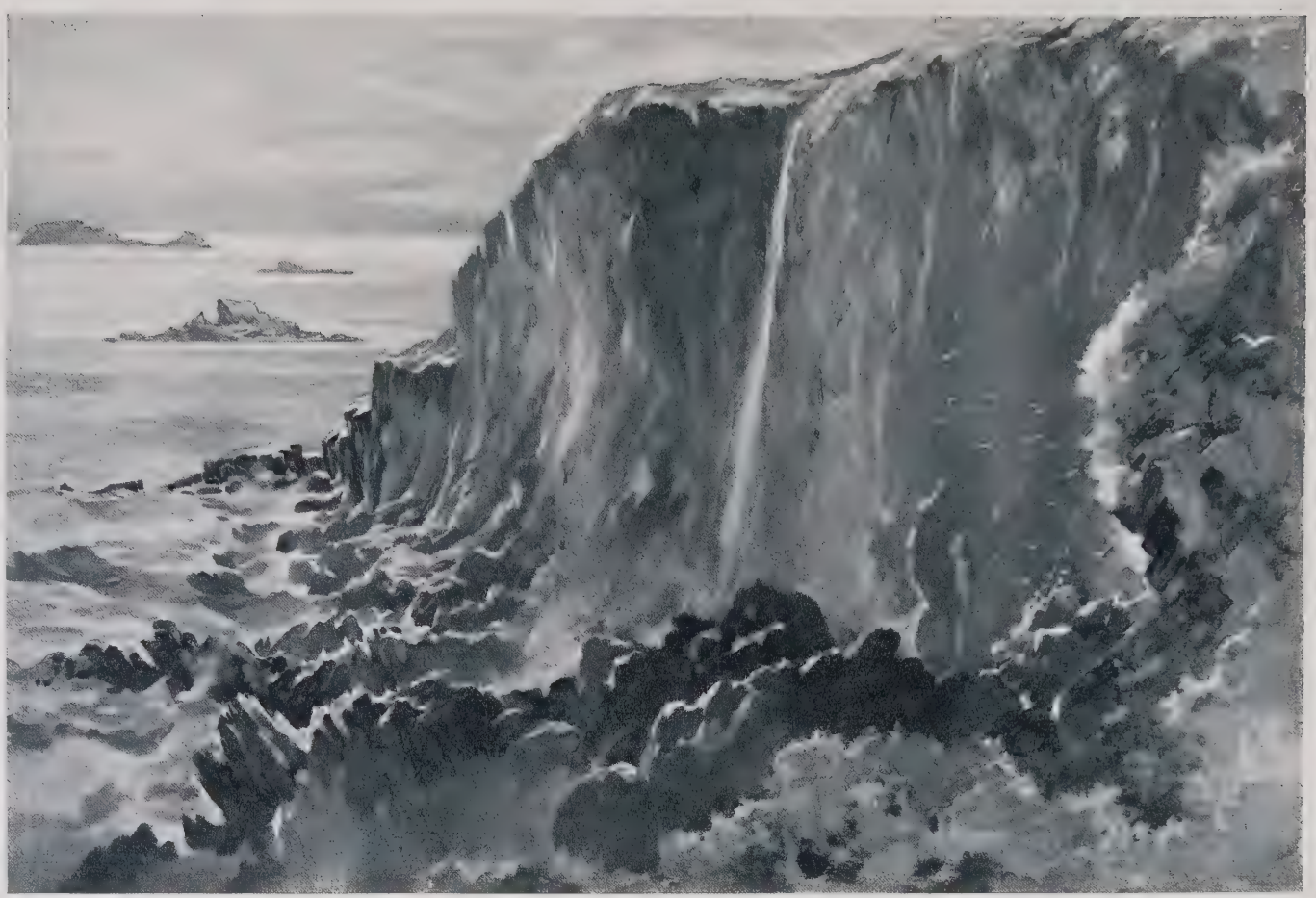
was called "Manus dexter" (or in Gaelic, *Laimh deas* = right hand). "On one occasion when St Columba was living in Hinba, and set about excommunicating some persecutors of the churches, amongst them the sons of Conal, the son of Donald, one of whom was called Joan, one of their associates was instigated by the Devil to rush upon the saint with a spear on purpose to kill him. To prevent this, one of the brethren named Findlugan put on the saint's cowl and interposed, being ready to die for the holy man; but in a wonderful way the saint's garment served as a strong and impenetrable fence, which could not be pierced by the thrust of a very sharp spear, though made by a powerful man." Laimh Deas was killed in a battle fought on the island of Luing exactly a year from that day, his death being foretold by the saint.

Joan, the son of Conal, the son of Donald, of the royal race of Gabran, probably had for his headquarters the castle of Dùn Chonail, which is about two miles distant from Eileach a' Naoimh. On his return voyage from a piratical expedition to Mull, where he had plundered the house of Columbanus, a dear friend of St Columba, the latter had called down upon the marauder the wrath of heaven, with the result that the pirates' boat and all it contained were engulfed in a raging sea which arose between Mull and Colonsay, "and in this wonderful manner, by such a singular storm, while the whole sea around remained quiet, were the robbers miserably but justly overwhelmed and sunk into the deep."

Now from the time of Adamnan, who died in the year 704, we find few references to Hinba, and these merely quotations from the early historians. The identity of the island was completely lost. Apart from the very few who studied the ancient manuscripts, even the name was unknown. No mention of Hinba is made by Fordun, Munro, Boetius, Buchanan, Martin, Pennant, MacCulloch, or others who wrote descriptions of the Hebrides; and this is an extraordinary fact when we consider that to St Columba it appears to have been as dear as his beloved Ii. If Ii was the place of his labours, Hinba was his resort for repose. In the crisis of his life, when a false step in the settlement of the throne of Dalriada might have lost him the fruit of his life's work, and been the ruin of his nation, it was to Hinba he retreated for meditation and that intense devotional introspection which produced the state of ecstasy or trance in which he beheld the vision of the angel with the "book of crystal." While we read of his strenuous life as an evangelist, of his adventures in field and flood, and amongst foreign and savage tribes, it is in Hinba we find him in that closer communion with God and halo of sanctity which the credulity of the time in the course of a generation converted into a personal intercourse with the Almighty in chambers filled with heavenly light; a light which human eyes could not see without the risk of blindness. No wonder that Dr Reeves says: "The identification of Hinba is the great desideratum of Hebridean topography."

There can be no doubt that Hinba lay to the south of Iona. As already mentioned, St Columba placed his uncle Ernan in charge of the monastery there. It is very unlikely that he would have placed an aged relative in a position of trust and importance further north; for Iona was on the confines of the territory of the Picts, and the Picts at the time were hostile to the Scots. Again, this retreat would be in all likelihood nearer the seat of Dalriadic power than the outpost on Iona: it would be between Iona and the district of Lorn and Knapdale, and was evidently within easy access of Iona. Again, when Brendan and other founders of monasteries came to visit the saint, they found him, unexpectedly it would seem, in Hinba. What more likely than that Brendan, who must have been close upon ninety years of age at the time, took the easiest and safest route from Ireland, passing along the coast of Kintyre, through the Sound of Luing, and then crossing the comparatively small space of open sea to Iona? Calling at the old foundation of Ailech on the way and finding the saint unexpectedly there, they were so delighted with the meeting that immediately arrangements were made for the celebration before alluded to. Eileach a' naoimh was undoubtedly the Ailech of St Brendan. Fordun, writing in the fourteenth century, calls it "*insula sanctorum*," and mentions the fact that it contained a monastery; and yet, in the space of the century which elapsed between his description and that of Dean Monro, we find

the latter passing it by with the mention of its name and the comment "ane very little ile." It must have been deserted about this time; and we need not wonder at this, for life and property were at that period of little account in the islands, and since then the island has been uninhabited. It may safely be said that the Ailech a' Naoimh (the mounds of the saints) of Brendan was the same as the Ii Naomha (Hinba, Holy Island) of Adamnan. There is no other island on the west possessing such unique relics of antiquity; their extent shows that the establishment was of great importance; they are certainly the oldest Christian monuments in the Western Isles; that they have been so well preserved is due to the secluded nature of their situation. We can therefore picture the quiet retreat of St Columba, the last resting-place of his mother Aethne. We see the chapel in which, with his friends, he celebrated the holy mysteries of the Eucharist; the house on the hill in which he saw the incomparable vision, and which was filled with heavenly brightness; the monastery of Ernan; and the anchorite's lowly cell at Muirbulcmar, where the saintly hermit Virgnous spent the evening of his days.



WATERFALL, COAST OF SCARBA.

CHAPTER VII

SCARBA; GULF OF COIREBHREACAIN

"Or where the northern ocean, in vast whirls,
Boils round the naked melancholy isles
Of farthest Thule, and the Atlantic surge
Pours in among the stormy Hebrides."

—THOMSON, *Seasons.*

ON a fine day, when the atmosphere is clear and a gentle wind from the west deepens the blue of the sea, the prospect from Dùn-Bhrenain is enchanting beyond description. On all sides stretch the broad waters of the Firth of Lorn, while, with the exception of the space between Mull and Colonsay on the west, the circle of the horizon is occupied by islands and highlands of varied hue and form. On the north and east, softened by distance to a remarkable uniformity in height, peak after peak of the Grampians and their spurs, relics of the old central plateau riven and scarred by a thousand glens and corries, rear their purple heads over a veneer of the grassy hills of Netherlorn; while on the south, many miles away, the smooth, undulating form of Islay appears in the leaden-coloured haze of distance, tempering the

transition from the light-blue of the firmament to the deeper azure of the ocean.

Amidst a galaxy of natural beauties the massive form of Scarba appears conspicuously, its glittering cone attaining a height of 1,490 feet. On the north and west the steep slopes exposed to the fury of the spray-laden blasts of the tempest are devoid of vegetation, the bare quartzite gleaming like burnished silver. Skirting the base of the precipices, and about 150 feet above sea-level, there is a broad belt of raised beach, densely carpeted with rich grass, but towards the autumn concealed by a forest of bracken, which grows to enormous proportions in the hollows, attaining a height of 7 feet or more.

Six beehive cells, of a nature similar to those found in Eilach a' Naoimh, but in a more ruinous condition, are clustered together on a sheltered depression leading down from the terrace to the bay called Iurach, the only landing-place on this side of the island. It may be that these cells formed the hermitage of Muirbulcmar; no such name has been preserved to us in the place-names of the district; but the probable derivation of the words (*Muir*, the sea; *bolg*, surging or soft; *mor*, great: the great surging sea) would indicate proximity to such a wild ocean as may be seen so frequently from this spot, caused by the rush of the tidal waters of Coirebhreacain.

The descent from the upper 150-feet to the lower 25-feet

COIREBHREACAIN.

terrace, with the exception of the depression alluded to, is sheer; and here a magnificent waterfall, of one unbroken leap of 120 feet, may be seen.

The eastern shores of the island slope gently, and are covered with large plantations of pine. On this side are the only habitations on the island — a gamekeeper's house at Rudha-na-maol, and a shooting-lodge at Kilmorie. A short distance from the lodge is the old burial-ground of Kilmorie (*Muire*, Mary), where at one time a church dedicated to the Virgin stood; or, as Fordun has it, "Ubi capella beatae Virginis, qua multa fiunt miracula." No trace of the chapel remains, and the neglected graveyard is fast being obliterated by fallen trees and a growth of coppice. The last interment took place about fifty years ago.

In 1797 there were fourteen families on the island; now two game-watchers and their families are the sole occupants, if one except the herds of deer and flocks of wild goat "that roam over the plain," for the island is now a deer forest.

The dominant position of Scarba in the landscape of the country has been more than once referred to; and the somewhat hazardous boat journey and arduous climb are well repaid by the bird's-eye view of the Netherlorn plateau and islands, and a wide extent of territory from the Irish coast in the south-west to Ben Nevis in the north, which is obtained from the summit. The east side is usually selected as the landing-place, and there are numerous sheltered bays

affording good anchorage for small boats. Many rolling ridges and long stretches of moorland have to be crossed ere the Cruach (summit) is reached, but the slopes from this side are gradual. Each new ridge surmounted, delightful and varied views are displayed; and the climb, though tiresome, is pleasant. The island itself, apart from its environment, has many interesting features; in the glades of natural woods noble specimens of the royal fern are still to be got; the tactics and habits of the red deer are a never-ending source of amusement and conjecture; while on the bare scalps and crags of the back of the island myriads of gulls, so unacquainted with the presence of man that "their tameness is shocking," find a resting-place. The deep ravines display striking sections of rock where the geologist may find ample material for study. The beautifully distinct bands and arches of silvery quartzite superimposed upon the dark slate make striking pictorial effects. Many of the small fragments of quartzite display curious blood-red plumose markings resembling fossil plants, or pressed fronds of dulse. These curious imitative effects are but an arborescent deposit of earthy oxide of iron; they are called dendritic markings, and are found on the divisional planes of fine-grained rocks. The deposit is usually confined to the surface of the fissure or plane, and seldom takes place within the stone.

The following description of Scarba and its wonders may give one an idea of how they appealed to the imagination of

WILD GOATS, SCARBA.

an enthusiastic Highland schoolmaster sixty years ago. The extract is taken from a letter to a friend in the south, which was published in the *Greenock Advertiser* in 1845. The periphrasis is occasionally ludicrous, and some of the words were constructed by the dominie himself:—

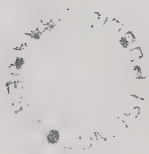
"I am now to endeavour to give you a representation of the islands you entrusted me with; but I am sorry to confess that you cannot expect it in any way mellifluent, given you from such an imperfect describer. But I shall take it for granted that you will be content for the will in place of the deed.

"Scarba is of a triangular form. One angle bears east, another bears south, and the third bears west; and since I did not circumnavigate it altogether, if you had the advantage of seeing its map, you shall have the goodness of forgiving me if I am mistaken. It rises, from the east and south-east, gradually into hills and valleys towards the top of it, of which hills and valleys some of them very gramineous and are computed very good for nourishing lanigerous cattle, of which the inhabitants have a great flock. The top of the mountain is very rugged, and is rendered almost useless, owing to the number of water ponds, of which there are no less than twelve, and also to its producing no grass, owing to the conglaciousness of the air in general; for although the califactiousness of the sun would cause people to produce sudor almost towards the shore, you would find water con-

glaciated upon its top. From the east point of it round towards the west, and from that to the south point, it is generally inaccessible with rocks and precipices, insurmountable by wild goats in general, excepting birds of prey, of which there are a great many that dwell among the stupendous cliffs, which are very dangerous to the quadrupeds called lambs, owing to their carnivorous nature (I mean eagles). There was one lately killed by a lad that had fired at it in its nest in time of incubation, that measured from the point of one wing to the other no less than 7 feet; of which there was found in its nest seven heads of the lamb race.

"Upon the north side of it (Scarba) lies that area of the ocean nomenclated *Beallach a choin ghlais*, whose stream goes with incredible rapidity, and between Scarba and Jura there is a conglomeration of tremendous billows connubritiated by the power of those elements called wind and water, and are rendered so terrificial where conquabated by the strength of said elements as to become an object of terror to those of a seafaring line when they would approach it. And as for the west and south-west sides of it, it is out of my power to describe it, for it would almost at times dishearten a hero, owing to its being shelterless in any part of it; tides and eddy-tides circumvolving it on all sides so as to render it dangerous almost at all seasons, if not aware of it. But of all the objects of dread (of which there are many) the only one of note is the whirlpool of *Cailleach*, whose fame is spread

HINDS ON THE SHORE, SCARBA.



over Europe, owing to its being so dangerous in itself and its being the cause of many dangers forby. The cause of its (*i.e.* Cailleach's) effervescence (if I may call it) is as yet unknown; but we must believe that there is a miraculous submaritime vortex that causes a constipation of billows so as to cause them to reverberate in the calmest of weather."

The author, Archibald Sinclair or Maighstir Sgoil Crubach (the lame schoolmaster), was parochial schoolmaster in the neighbouring parish of Kilbrandon. He called his school the "Netherlorn Academy," and prided himself upon being the first dominie in the Highlands to introduce a course of physical exercises into a school curriculum, or "curricuculum," as he called it. The meagreness of the schoolmaster's salary and his own improvidence forced him to end his days in the poorhouse.

The channel between the north of Scarba and the island of Lunga is known as Bealach a Choin Ghlais (the Strait of the Grey Dog), or the Little Gulf; while that betwixt Jura and Scarba is called the Great Gulf, or the Gulf of Coire-bhreacain. The former is about 1 cable broad, and the stream of water during the greater part of ebb and flood rushes along the narrow pass with much violence. So great is the overfall on the current, that even during moderate tides it is impossible to force a boat through.

The Great Gulf is 6 cables broad at the narrowest part, and, unlike the Sound of Luing which is long and sinuous,

it is a short, straight, rim-like exit. This fact, and the enormous disproportion betwixt the capacity of the outlet and the volume of the seas which are forced up against it during the rise of the tide, combine to make the passage of the waters the most turbulent and dangerous on our coasts. In the long, narrow channels of the sounds of Luing and Clachan the obstruction to the tidal current is sustained for a considerable distance, and a measure of equilibrium is maintained so that the speed of the efferent stream seldom exceeds 6 knots, the average being $4\frac{1}{2}$. In the Gulf, however, which is the main outlet for the huge tidal wave from the Irish Channel banked up in the wedge-shaped basin formed by the convergence of the chain of islands, Islay, Jura, Scarba and Luing, on the one side, with Kintyre, Knapdale, and Craignish on the other, the passage is sudden, so that there is a great overfall and race on the flood, the current attaining a maximum speed of 9 knots. In some parts the soundings are 150, 90, and 50 fathoms, but at one place about 300 yards off Bàgh Bàn (White Bay), on the shore of Scarba, a blunted, pyramidal rock shoots up to within 15 fathoms of the surface. The presence of this sudden obstruction causes the breaking sea which, except at the turn of the tide, is never absent from the spot; and when the stream is at its greatest velocity a huge broad spout of green water appears to shoot up from the depths, breaking in a cataract of foaming, surging sea as it descends on the further side of the obstruc-

SCARBA, FROM LUING.

tion, and appears to bore its way down to the bottom of the ocean. The presence of powerful eddies on each side, but especially one on the Scarba shore, known as the Saobh-shruth Mòr (Great Eddy), causes innumerable whirls, but these are not very large or dangerous in themselves, apart from the risk that they might carry small craft into the raging cauldron above the sunken reef. With strong contrary winds the agitation of the water is very much increased, and the impression of stupendous, remorseless power, together with the loud, hoarse, angry roar of the seething maelström, makes the scene awe-inspiring and sublime.

This natural phenomenon is known as Coirebhreacain—a word which has been translated as the Cauldron of the Speckled Seas. The natives speak of it as the Cailleach (the Hag).

> "Of Corryvreckin's whirlpool rude,
> When dons the Hag her whiten'd hood—
> 'Tis thus our isles-men's fancy frames,
> For scenes so stern, fantastic names."

But even as long ago as the seventh century, the name Brecan appears to have been a personal one. Adamnan speaks of the *Charybidis Brecani*. The ancient topographical work—the Dinnseanchas—says: "It is the confluence of many seas, each pouring itself into the place of the other, until they are swallowed down to the bottom, and until it is like an open cauldron, sucking in and disgorging its draughts; so

that its roaring is like the distant thunder. And it was into this that Brecan, the son of Partholan, was drawn, and was drowned, with his fifty boats, when he fled out of Erin from his father." In Cormac's Glossary it is said: "The seas whirl round like revolving compasses, each taking the place of the other, like the paddles of a millwheel, until they are sucked into the depths, so that the *Coire* remains with its mouth wide open; and it would suck even the whole of Erin into his yawning gullet. Brecan, son of Maine, son of Nial Naoighiallach, had fifty curraghs trading between Erin and Alban. They fell afterwards on that *coire*, and it swallowed them altogether, and not even news of their destruction escaped from it."

Although from the text of these writings the name might be said to apply to the passage between Islay and Ireland, later writers—Fordun, Monro, and others—applied the name to the present situation. According to popular tradition, the gulf owes its name to Brecan, a son of the King of Lochlin (Norway). This prince, to prove his devotion to his love, agreed to pass three days and nights in his galley at anchor in the Coire. Acting upon the advice of the wise men of Lochlin, he had three ropes made, one of wool, another of hemp, and a third of the hair of women of spotless fame. With the aid of these he anchored in the terrible sea. During the first night the woollen rope broke, during the second night the hempen rope parted, and—alas for Brecan

WEST COAST OF SCARBA, LOOKING TOWARDS EASDALE.

and his hopes!—his fearful vigil was almost completed when the hair of some frail one proved unequal to the strain, the remaining strands gave way, and the true lover and his ship were engulfed in the sea which has ever since borne his name. The body of the prince was afterwards dragged ashore by his faithful black dog which had accompanied him, and was buried in Uamh Bhreacain (the cave of Brecan) on the shores of Jura.

Many fearsome stories are told of the dangers of the gulf. How ships in full sail, deserted by their crews, have gone down and been cast up unharmed on the shore of Bàgh na Muc in Jura; how boats have been saved from the treacherous whirlpool by the simple expedient of casting a cap or a piece of cork into the vortex, the gaping vortex immediately collapsing and allowing the frail craft to pass through in safety; of mariners closing the hatches and remaining below until the ship was whirled to the bottom and vomited out again. These stories remind one of Poe's description of the *Descent into the Maelström*, but are equally fanciful; for except as regards small vessels and open boats there is no danger; and with these, ordinary prudence and the observation of the old injunction to "tak' a lang spune to sup wi' the deil" have made tragedies in the gulf unknown.

The north part of Jura (*Ceann Uachdarach*, the upper end) is wild and rugged, indented with skerry-covered bays, and fringed by a selvage of terraces formed by sills of basaltic

rock. Until a few years ago it formed one extensive sheep farm: now it is a deer forest. On the shore of Glengarrisdale Bay, a few miles down the west side, is a cave in which there is preserved—or was a few years ago—the skull of some unknown warrior. Two deep sword-cuts on the frontal part of the bone showed that he had died with his face to the foe: one stroke had cut a disc of bone cleanly off; while the fatal blow had penetrated deeply into the brain above the temple.

On the whole, this part of the coast is uninteresting. One well-known traveller says: "Intimate as I am with Jura, I have little to say of it, and much less to say in its favour. The distant view of its mountains, remarkable no less for their conical forms than their solitary reign, leads to expectations that are not realised." Even our old friend the Maighstir Sgoil Crubach, in talking of Jura, displays none of that magniloquence which characterises his description of Scarba. I quote the remainder of his *Letter to a Friend in the South*, in which he also refers to the island of Eileach a' Naoimh, lying to the north-west. "Jura is twenty-four miles in length and about or between seven or eight miles in breadth, and the west side of it is uninhabited owing to its infertility. Opposite to *Cailleach* (the north side of it) there are a great many caves and rocks, very stupendous. There is one cave of note, appellated *Uamh Bhreacain*, and in the cave there is a dog's shoulder bone, supposed to be that of the *cu dubh*

LOCH AVICH, WITH THE PAPS OF JURA IN THE DISTANCE.

(black dog) that brought Breacan ashore when he was drowned, which caused that proverb in our vernacular tongue gendered to us, *Tha latha choin duibh gun tighinn fathast.*

"The inhabitants of Jura are generally of a robust constitution, and are inured to hardships. The produce of the island is almost worthy of no notice, excepting cattle, of which they have a great many, especially sheep; and they also keep a good many goats, owing to the ruggedness of the island in general, and they cannot but be very lucrative owing to their disposition by way of scrambling rocks and other inaccessible places. Deer are there, too, and the laird pays a good deal of attention to them.

"Eileacha Naomh bears quite north from Jura, and it is reckoned an excellent pasturage for cattle. But, above all, it is worthy of note for its ancient relics of catacombs and monasteries; and also for the coats of arms that are still to be seen there, which prove that the founder of them was a most excellent Dedalian, and undoubtedly that he was an admirer of the rites of the Church of Rome, because of the handcuffs that are to be seen there, and were used when the people made their auricular confession, when their hands would have been pressed with a stone wedge with severity, so that it would have been impossible for them to have concealed any of their past failures.

"Dear sir, you shall have the goodness of accepting of this incongruous description, and of forgiving my inability in

construing this description, and had I it in my power I would de-decorate it with apothegms and consociate it with irradiance. If you are thinking of using it I beg of you to revise it, and to supplement what is desiderated so as to make it intelligible. Let me know whether you are pleased or not, and I bid you adieu, wishing you a continuity of beatitude and opulence.—Dear Sir, Yours, "A. S.

"KILBRANDON, 30*th July* 1845."

HEAD OF LOCH MELFORT FROM NEAR DEGNISH.

CHAPTER VIII

CRAIGNISH, MELFORT

"Records hung
Round strath and mountain, stamped by the ancient tongue
On rock and ruin, darkening as we go—
Spots where a word, ghost-like, survives to show
What crimes from hate, or desperate love, have sprung."—WORDSWORTH.

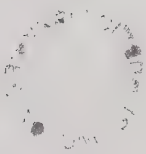
SEPARATED from the Sound of Shuna and Loch Melfort by the long, tongue-like promontory of Craignish, a narrow loch of the same name passes inland for 5 miles. It is the maritime continuation or fiord of Glen Domhain (pronounced Doin—deep), and receives the waters of the Duchara and Barbreck rivers which flow down the valley; the distance from the watershed, a mile from Loch Avich and Loch Awe, to Craignish Point, being about 10 miles.

Loch Craignish has been the theme of much poetic description. MacCulloch, who takes the credit of being the first traveller to recognise its beauties, lingers lovingly upon the subject :—"On entering the inlet, and from different positions, we are struck by the magnificent and ornamented perspective of the two boundaries of the water, stretching away, for a distance of six or seven miles, in straight, though

indented and varied lines, till they meet in the geometrical vanishing point, vanishing also in the air tints of the horizon. Between these is seen the magnificent vista of the islands; the nearest, rich with scattered woods and ancient solitary trees, rising into rocky hills separated by green valleys and farms, and projecting promontories of the most beautiful forms, between which are seen deep bays, often overshadowed by trees springing from the rocks and spreading their rich foliage over the water. Hence the perspective of the whole range of the islands is prolonged like that of the boundaries of the loch; till also the last extremity of the last island vanishes alike in the aërial and in the geometric perspective. As the general character of all the islands is exactly similar, the effect produced by the incessant repetition of similar objects in a constant state of diminution is most remarkable."

There are two lines of islands, equidistant from each other and the shores of the loch; and it is the remarkable similarity in colour and form of the individual islands, and their seeming reduplication, which gives Loch Craignish a striking and unique character. Eilean Righ (King's Island) and Eilean Mhic Naomhein (Macniven's Island) are large enough for single farms; while the others, and also the curious group of islets outside Craignish Point—Reisa Mhic Phaidein, Cor-reisa, Reis-an-t-shruith, and Garbh-reisa—afford excellent grazing.

DUNTROON CASTLE.



The western coast of Craignish on the Sound of Shuna is strikingly picturesque. The region is one of schistose rocks, which weather and disintegrate much more quickly than the slate and quartzite of other parts of the district, and thus we find basaltic dykes much more prominently in relief. These cross the peninsula from side to side, and on the west shore many attain a height of 100 feet or more, their breadth being about 12 feet. The resemblance to artificial buttresses and walls is in many cases increased by the growth of ivy, which gives the dykes the appearance of ruined fortifications.

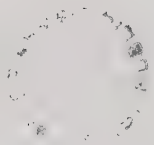
On each side of the mouth of the loch an ancient Highland fortress stands sentinel. On the western promontory, embowered in woods and prettily situated at the head of Loch Beg, Craignish Castle is seen; while a little to the east of Ardifuar the eastern headland, the "Castle of the Turrets," as Duntroon was called, crowns a bare eminence. Repaired by the present proprietors, its gaunt, warlike appearance, and the absence of ornamental woods or policies, make it somewhat of an anachronism, and one cannot but feel that a ruined tower would have been more in keeping with the spirit of the place.

Now in the possession of the Malcolms of Poltalloch, it formerly belonged to a branch of the Campbells of Argyll, descended from Cailein Iongantach (wonderful Colin), the fourth MacCailein Mòr and twelfth Knight of Lochow. For

four hundred years it remained their property, until sold by the trustees of Captain Niel Campbell about the end of the eighteenth century. The financial difficulties which caused the sale were occasioned by the failure of the Ayr Bank; and it is a peculiar coincidence that it was the failure of the Western Bank, half a century later, which compelled the proprietor of Craignish to dispose of a large part of his property, including the castle.

During the Montrose wars, Colla Ciotach (left-handed Coll) MacDonald, a famous free-lance of the Antrim family, came over from Ireland to assist the Royalists. At a skirmish close to Duntroon his piper was taken prisoner, and shortly afterwards an ambuscade was laid for Coll, who, reinforced, was advancing with his "birlinns" (galleys) to storm the castle. The piper, noticing the danger of his master, began to play a "piobaireachd" ostensibly for the entertainment of the captain of the garrison, who was himself an enthusiastic admirer of this form of music. The composition, since known as "Colla, mo rùn" (Coll, my love), or the "Piper's warning to his master," breathes such a spirit of melancholy and wail of hopelessness, interspersed with passages of quick, nervous music calling for alert and instant action, that the notes, wafted across the water to his friends, could not but convey to those conversant with the style of the musician the warning that some awful danger awaited them. The advancing party turned aside and the Campbell chieftain, fully appreciating

SOUND OF SHUNA, LOCH BEG AND CRAIGNISH CASTLE.



the cause, instantly slew the piper. The words applied to the piece, translated, are somewhat as follows:—

"Coll, my love, be ready, depart; be ready, depart;
Coll, my love, be ready, depart;
We are in their hands, we are in their hands.
Coll, my love, avoid the dun (castle), avoid the dun;
Coll, my love, avoid the dun;
We are in their hands, we are in their hands.
An oar, a baler; an oar, a baler;
We are in their hands, we are in their hands,"

and so on.

A few years afterwards Coll's son, Alexander MacDonald (Alasdair MacColla), during his memorable invasion of Argyll, attacked Craignish Castle; but it was stubbornly defended, and Alasdair, who in derision had said of it,

"Caisteal beag biorach na faochagan,
Cuiridh oiteag do 'n ghaoth air chridh e,"

("The little pointed castle of the whelks,
A puff of wind will make it tremble,")

was forced to raise the siege.

The district of Craignish was for centuries the scene of more than ordinary strife; it seems to have been a sort of debatable ground for the possession of which, not only different clans, but also rival and closely-connected branches of the later proprietors, the great clan Campbell, contended. Its earliest traditions refer to battles betwixt the natives and the Danes. On its western shore, at Bàgh Dal nan Ceann (the Bay of the Field of the Heads), are a number of cairns erected in com-

memoration of such a fight: while in the Barbreck valley are numerous monoliths and tumuli which tell of a great conflict when the Danes, under their King Olaf, attacked the Scots at Drumrigh (the King's Ridge); the latter were forced to retire, but making a stand a few miles up the valley at a place called Sluggan, the Danish general was killed—a "standing stone" still marks the spot. The Danes being driven back to where Barbreck House now is, were there completely routed and King Olaf slain. A large tumulus, Dùnan Aula, was erected on the fatal field to commemorate the victory and mark the burial-place of the king.

A little bay near Craignish Point is known as Port nan Athullach (the Atholmen's Port). In 1681, after the forfeiture of the Earl of Argyll, his property was placed under the control of the Earl of Atholl, who was secretly instructed to ravage the estates and show no mercy to the Campbell lairds and followers. The Craignish chief had taken all the cattle away to the islands for safety, and on returning met and utterly destroyed a party of Atholmen at this spot.

The earliest possessors of the peninsula and strath of Craignish of whom tradition speaks were the MacEachrans of Nether Craignish, the MacMartins of the Strath, and the Gillieses of Duchra and Glenmore. From MacEachran, whose foster-son he was, Dugald, son of Archibald, fourth Knight of Lochow, who flourished about 1190, got as a patrimony the estate of Na-h-Ard, or Nether Graignish, and from him the

BARBRECK POST OFFICE.

Campbells of Craignish received their patronymic — Mac Dhughail Chreaganis (the MacDougall Campbells of Craignish). This family—the eldest cadets of the house of Argyll—was a virile race, its members in all generations, to their cost, little disposed to diplomacy or guile, but staunch defenders of their rights and good soldiers. By marriage alliance and conquest they quickly acquired large possessions, and their growing power was noted with apprehension and jealousy by the parent house of Lochow. Unfortunately, in the eighth generation the family was represented by a female—Cairistiona Nighean Dhugail Chreaganis—of whose weakness and imprudence the Knight of Lochow took advantage to have the estate resigned to him, she receiving back a small portion of the upper part of Craignish under his superiority. The nearest male representative—Raoul Mòr na-h-òrdaig (Big Ronald of the Thumb) —fought hard for his heritage, and Argyll was obliged to allow him possession of a considerable portion of the estate, but retaining the superiority, and inserting a condition in the grant that failing a male heir in the direct line the lands were to revert to the Argyll family. In 1544 the direct line failed. In the same year the nearest collateral heir, Tearlach Mòr (Big Charles) Mhic Dhughail, of Corranmore in Craignish, had the misfortune to kill Gillies of Glenmore in a brawl; he fled to Perthshire and settled on Lochtayside, receiving the protection of the Breadalbane family. From him many honourable families were descended, his offspring being known as

Sliochd Thearlaich Dhuibh (the Race of Black Charles). This unfortunate occurrence prevented Charles claiming the estate which, with the exception of the small barony of Barrichibeyan, became the absolute property of the Argyll family.

The later history of the collateral branches and of the property which they possessed is exceedingly chequered and full of romance, but too lengthy for repetition here.

Of Ronald Mòr the following story is told. He was bound under charter to render certain services to the Baron of Barrichibeyan, one of which was that the proprietor of Craignish had to cut the corn at harvest for the latter. To a man of Ronald's high temper this service was irksome, and he adopted a plan to make the fulfilment of it unpleasant for the baron. Alleging that although he was bound to reap, he was not bound to tie, he caused the tenants to cut the corn during a storm of wind, but did not allow them to bind it, with the result that by next day the corn was scattered in all directions. It became a saying when reapers did not bind as they cut — "*Buain Raoul mòr na-h-òrdaig. Buain an diugh, 's ceangail a màireach*" ("The shearing of Ronald Mòr. Reap to-day and bind to-morrow").

On the ridge betwixt Kilmartin and Craignish, a river, called Allt Atha mhic Mhartein (the River of MacMartin's Ford), takes its rise. Here, a laird of Craignish, returning from visiting Lochow at his castle of Innis Chonail, was overtaken by a party of MacMartins and forced to fight.

HILL FORT ON KILMARTIN ROAD.

ISLINGTON PUBLIC

The MacMartins were defeated, and their chief, who was Craignish's wife's brother, was killed. Craignish, out of pity, took MacMartin's son and placed him in charge of his brother Duncan Campbell, called MacRath or the Fortunate Son. One day, when the boy had grown up, his foster-father took him to the wood to cut harrow pins, and while resting after their labour the boy began toying with MacRath's dirk. Being asked what he would like to do with the dirk, the boy replied that he would kill the man who killed his father. MacRath, thinking it better to put a probable avenger of MacMartin's death out of the way, stabbed the boy and threw the body into a loch near by, which has since been called Loch Mhic Mhartein. It is said that Duncan MacRath (pronounced MacRa) Campbell, after the commission of this savage deed, fled to the north, and became the progenitor of the fierce MacRaes of Kintail.

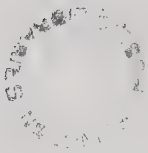
The road from Craignish skirts the sea-shore, and passing over the promontory of Asknish, debouches upon an interesting country hemmed in between an amphitheatre of torrent-scarred hills and the shores of Loch Melfort. Circumscribed as it is, and with a free outlet by the sea only, this little corner presents scenes of rural beauty unsurpassed in any part of the Highlands. At Culfail, the centre of the district, pleasantly situated in a sheltered hollow on the side of a mountain spur, ample facilities are given for fishing the lochs and tarns which stud the uplands; while no one could wish

for a more peaceful retreat, or for more comfortable head-quarters from which to penetrate into the wild mountain fastnesses which guard the approaches to the valley of Loch Awe.

The configuration of the country is strikingly different from that of the sea-board. Instead of the long ridges of the slate and schistose regions, the andesite and other igneous outpourings of the Old Red Sandstone age, which cap the older metamorphic rocks, are intersected by river gorges and valleys into dome-shaped hills, giving the comparatively small area in question a somewhat chaotic, but entertaining, as it is unexpected, variety of scenery. One of these river gorges —the famous Pass of Melfort — has been formed by the passage of the River Oude. The stream has cut its way deeply through a huge mass of andesite; at the deepest part, where the cutting has been completed, the rocks on each side are several hundred feet high; while at the middle of the pass, where the wearing back of the gorge is actively in progress, the river pours with thundering noise in a series of foaming cataracts. The public road, constructed about 1824, has been cut out of the side of the ravine, and in some places is completely overhung by beetling cliffs. During a spate of waters, the scene, at all times fine, is of the grandest description.

About three-quarters of a mile to the east of Culfail is a pretty little lake known as Loch a Phearsain (the Parson's

CULFAIL.



Loch); on it is a finely-wooded island with ruins. The stream just as it emerges from the lake forms a fine cascade, falling fully 40 feet.

The view from the head of Loch Melfort is attractive. Unlike other lochs in the district, this arm of the sea runs east and west. Its course seawards is interrupted by the islands of Shuna and Luing, which lie athwart its mouth; while high ridges of hills hem it in on both sides, that on the north indented with pretty little bays between finely-wooded promontories; that on the south, bare, smooth, and green, and devoid of beauty, but adding by contrast to the charm of the other. Its total length is about 5 miles and its breadth seldom over 1 mile, so that the eye receives, from this compression of parts, the impression of a completed and pleasing picture which would be wanting were the proportions upon a more ample scale.

The lands of Melfort, at one time in the possession of the MacDougalls, Lords of Lorn, were granted about 1343, by King David II., to Gilleasbuig Mòr (Great Archibald) Campbell, Knight of Lochow, who conferred them upon a half-brother Niel, from whom were descended the MacNeill Campbells of Melfort. Son succeeded father in unbroken succession until 1838, when the property was sold by Colonel John Campbell to an English powder company, the only portion of the lands retained being the family burying-ground. The small property of Kilchoan, however, which was purchased from

the MacLachlans by Colonel John, and accepted by his mother as a dower to facilitate the sale of the estate, remained in the hands of the family until 1906.

The Melfort Campbells during the last one hundred and thirty years have had a most distinguished record in the civil and military services. During that period the descendants of Captain Archibald Campbell of Melfort, who died in 1773, and his wife Annabel, daughter of Campbell of Barcaldine, and granddaughter of the famous chieftain Sir Ewen Cameron of Locheil, gave to the service of their country two admirals, one captain R.N., one commander R.N., four generals, four colonels, two majors, six captains, and six lieutenants. Three of these were Knight Commanders of the Bath, two governors of colonies, and one governor of the then important fortress of Fort George. Three sons of Lieutenant Colonel John Campbell of Melfort were killed in the Polygar and Mahratta wars at the beginning of last century — two of these, Captain John and Lieutenant Alexander, both of the 74th, on the one day, at the storming of a Polygar fort; the third, Lorn, also in the 74th, at the battle of Assaye in 1803. In connection with the death of Lorn Campbell the following perfectly authenticated story is told. "Mrs Campbell of Melfort was one night startled by seeing her youngest son standing by her bedside looking sadly at her. She marked down the month and the day. Some long time afterwards she received the mournful news that her son had fallen that day in battle."

IN THE PASS OF MELFORT.

A fourth son, Lieutenant Colin, so distinguished himself in the same wars at the storming of Ahmednuggur, that Sir Arthur Wellesly, who was a witness of his gallant conduct, promoted him on the field to be his Brigade Major. He was ever after a close personal friend of the Duke of Wellington, and served with him in almost every action in the Peninsula, thereafter in Belgium, at Quatre Bras and Waterloo; became Lieutenant-General and K.C.B., and was successively Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia and Governor and Commander-in-Chief in Ceylon. He received eleven medals from his sovereign, the foreign Orders of Maria Theresa of Austria, Knight of St George of Russia, of Maximilian Joseph of Bavaria, and was Knight Commander of the Portuguese Order of the Tower and the Sword. In a private letter the Duke wrote him, the following occurs. "We are both getting old; God knows if we shall ever meet again. Happen what may, I shall never forget our first meeting under the walls of Ahmednuggur."

In 1801 the Duke, then Sir Arthur, had written regarding Alexander Campbell: "Upon this occasion Campbell of the 74th (Jack's brother) was killed, and, I believe, all the officers of the 74th were either killed or wounded, among others, Jack Campbell himself, who has since died of his wounds. He is a loss to the service for which, in my opinion, all the Polygars in India cannot compensate."

Another of those heroic brothers, Admiral Sir Patrick

Campbell, K.C.B., in 1801, when a Captain commanding the *Dart* a sloop of twenty guns and one hundred and thirty men, taking advantage of a dark night, ran the gauntlet of a whole French squadron of frigates lying for safety in Dunkirk Roads, and cut out and carried by boarding the *Désirèe* a French frigate of forty guns and three hundred men. "Lord St Vincent pronounced this to have been one of the finest instances of gallantry on record. In his despatch he alludes to the unparalleled bravery of Captain Campbell. He used to call him 'the little man with the big heart.'"

During the time of James VII. the lands were alienated and bestowed upon the Duke of Perth, whose successor bears the titles of Viscount and Earl of Melfort in the peerage of Scotland, and Duc de Melfort in that of France. The estate was restored at the Revolution in 1688.

The property was at one time divided into different farms, tenanted, after the coming of the Campbells, by their original possessors. The chiefs made their dwelling at Ardinstur; a tribe of MacColls remained in occupation of Kenmor; while a family of MacOrans occupied the farm of Fernoch, where the present mansion-house, erected in 1808, stands.

About the end of the fifteenth century, MacOran had the misfortune to kill a son of the chief. Flying to Perthshire to escape the vengeance of the clan, he entered the service of the Earl of Menteith, in whose household he obtained rapid promotion, marrying Miss Haldane, a niece of the Earl,

MELFORT HOUSE

and receiving, rent free, the farm of Inchanoch near the Lake of Menteith. Here for some generations the family resided; but it was observed that any members who left the district assumed the name of Campbell, so that it became a saying that "there never was a Campbell in Inchanoch nor a MacOran out of it." In 1805, James MacOran and his family left the farm, and removed to Glasgow, assuming, as was the custom, the name of Campbell. His son, James MacOran or Campbell, became a successful merchant, and, as Lord Provost of Glasgow at the time of the birth of the Prince of Wales in 1841, received the honour of knighthood. His eldest son was the late James Campbell of Stracathro, for many years Member of Parliament for the Universities of Aberdeen and Glasgow; while his second son was the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Prime Minister of Great Britain and Ireland.

CHAPTER IX

KILNINVER

"Is the remembrance of battles always pleasant to the soul? Do not we behold with joy the place where our fathers feasted? But our eyes are full of tears on the fields of their war. This stone shall rise, with all its moss, and speak to other years."—OSSIAN.

AFTER his futile attempt upon Craignish Castle, Alexander MacDonald, in his progress northwards, invaded Melfort. The laird, John Campbell, was absent with his retainers in attendance upon Argyll, and his wife, endeavouring to appease the fierce enemies of her clan, gave orders to have a sumptuous repast laid in the mansion-house, then at Ardinstur, for their entertainment, while she and all the inhabitants hid themselves in the woods and mountain retreats. The hostile army, having arrived at the house, regaled themselves with the food and drink provided, and being in high good humour, MacDonald issued strict injunctions to his men not to meddle with any of Melfort's property. Shortly after leaving, and as he ascended the hill to pass over into the neighbouring district of Kilninver, he noticed the house in flames. In a great fury he caused enquiry to be made, and hanged three Irishmen, who were found guilty,

BETWEEN DEGNISH AND MELFORT.

upon a gallows erected upon the summit of the hill known as Kenmor, at a place called Tom-a-chrochaidh (the mound of hanging).

Alexander and his army thereafter passed over the hill by a place called Doire nan cliabh (the grove of the Creels) — the mountain track formerly much frequented by wayfarers to and from Easdale roughly indicates the route — and arrived in the evening at the house of Ardmaddie, where the Royalist laird, John Maol MacDougall, resided. Next day the host of armed men proceeded up a pretty little glen called Glen Risdale, over the ridge bounding Glen Euchar on the south, down Allt Timlich, to Reray House, also a seat of the MacDougalls. Here the army rested to allow stragglers to rejoin. A small body of Campbells, under Ian beag Campbell of Bragleen awaited battle at a place called Laganmor, and as Alasdair MacColla's men moved to the fight, the pipers struck up a war-tune, since known as "Mnathan a' ghlinne so" (the women of this glen). The words applied to the composition had a dreadful portent:—

"A' Mhnathan a' ghlinne so, ghlinne so, ghlinne so;
A' Mhnathan a' ghlinne so,
'S mithich dhuibh eiridh"—

words imploring the women of the fateful glen to arise and fly for their lives. The wail of the tune—it might be called a dirge — was well calculated to inspire the inhabitants with

the feeling that desperate work was at hand; but none in that sweetest and most peaceful of glens could conjecture the horrors of the day which had just dawned upon the mountains. The action between the opposing forces was short, but decisive; the Campbells were hopelessly beaten, and their leader, a man of great strength and courage, was taken prisoner. Thereafter MacDonald caused his men to scour the glen and its neighbourhood, and drive all the women, children, and old men to the secluded hollow where the fight had taken place. There these inoffensive people, whose only fault was that they belonged to the execrated clan Campbell, were, together with the prisoners, shut up in a large barn, and the building set on fire. All were consumed, with the exception of the Campbell general, John of Bragleen, who, putting a peat creel on his head, burst through the half-consumed doorway; and a young woman who followed in his wake, and who, being very fleet of foot, quickly out-distanced her pursuers. Her descendants are still in the district. John of Bragleen was recaptured, and being brought before the Royalist general was asked: "What would you do, John, if I was in your place?" "I would give you a chance for life. Form a wide circle of soldiers around me, and if I can break through, let me go," remarked John. This was done, but try as he would, he could not manage to break through by force. Having recourse to stratagem, he made as if to force his way, but suddenly throwing his sword high in the

LAGANMOR.

air, his opponents, endeavouring to avoid the sword in its flight, allowed John the chance he desired of slipping past. John Campbell and Alexander MacDonald had many subsequent encounters, but in all their fighting they appear to have had kindly feelings and genuine respect for one another, and in times of strait to have afforded each other what is known as "cothrom na Feinne" (the fair play of the Fingalians).

The barn where this massacre was perpetrated is known as Sabhal nan Cnamh (the Barn of the Bones), and a heap of ruins close to the main road at Laganmor in Glen Euchar marks the spot.

The history of Sir Alexander MacDonald is one long record of war and rapine. He was of that branch of the MacDonalds represented by the Antrim family: his father, the notorious Colkitto (Colla ciotach—Left-handed Coll), played a prominent part in the wars of the previous half-century, when the Crown's method of pacification was "garring ane devil dang anither"; his mother was of the Campbells of Achnambreac in Cowal. Macdonald was a fearless soldier, and a skilful leader of irregular troops. A Celt himself, he thoroughly understood the nature of Highland soldiers, and led them in such a manner as to develop their fighting power to its fullest extent. He may have been no great strategist, and his defence of Kintyre, before the final expulsion of the Royalist troops, was puerile; but his hardships during the previous

years, his life of constant danger and excessive exertion, added to an inclination for huge potations of "aqua vitæ," had by that time dulled his intellect, and made him at times more of an unreasoning savage. It was different when he first landed at Knoidart from Ireland in July 1644. His march thence across Scotland to join Montrose near Perth was carried out in a soldierly and skilful manner. His ships were burned by the enemy, and retreat thus impossible; he was closely pursued by Argyll's army; a large force of the northern clans under the Earls of Sutherland and Caithness lay at the head of Strathspey, ready to take him in flank; and yet by a swiftness and boldness which imposed upon his enemies and paralysed their movements, he executed the difficult flank march with no loss, and showed that he possessed tactical qualities of no mean order. Thereafter he took part with Montrose in the battles of Tippermuir and Aberdeen. Argyll, who had, with a greatly superior force, followed the Royalist army, but had failed to engage them owing to the celerity of their movements and his own ponderous method of conducting a campaign, now made a serious attempt to bring about an action. Montrose, choosing suitable ground at Fyvie, turned about, although much outnumbered, and accepted battle; but Argyll, failing to dislodge him at the first irresolute onset, retired his army which he shortly thereafter disbanded, he himself proceeding to Edinburgh, where the Committee of Estates received him

THE PASS OF MELFORT.

in no good humour. It was at this juncture, although it was now midwinter, and against all the rules of war to campaign, that Montrose and MacDonald determined to glut to the full their appetite for revenge upon Argyll and his clan. The army was divided into three parties, under the command of the Marquis, MacDonald, and Clanranald. The whole of central Argyllshire was wasted by fire and sword; Clanranald's force killed, it is said, nine hundred men; but none did the execution of Alexander MacDonald and his host. He had a century of family wrongs, one might say of racial feuds, to spur him on; and in his lust of fury and hate he spared neither sex nor age, house nor cattle. It was at this time that his expedition to Netherlorn was made; and his name has remained such a terror in the districts inhabited by the Campbell clans, that mothers, to quieten unruly children, still speak of "*Alasdair MacColla, fear tholla nan tighean*" ("Alasdair, son of Coll, the man who destroys the houses").

Argyll, hearing of this invasion of his territory, left Edinburgh hurriedly for Inveraray, and sent round the fiery cross to gather his clan in defence of the district. So speedy, however, were Montrose's movements, that he was within two miles of Inveraray ere the Campbell chief was aware of his presence in Argyllshire. Here, and again at Inverlochy, Argyll proved that, however bold he might be as a statesman, however brave politically, he was no soldier. On this occasion he entered a fishing smack and fled to Dumbarton, leaving

his country and his people to their fate. There was thus no organised resistance, and many hostile tribes too willing to help in the work of destruction, so that for six weeks there was wholesale murder and rapine: the fair land was left a desert of smoking ruins.

Towards the end of January 1645 Montrose withdrew his forces to the north, and had reached Kilchuimein (now Fort Augustus) on his way to Inverness to engage the army of Seaforth, when he received the startling intelligence that Argyll, with a mixed force of Highlanders and Lowlanders, had reached Inverlochy in pursuit; while another army was being organised in the south under the command of General Baillie to prevent his retreat there. He resolved to beat these armies in detail. Turning round and concealing his movements as much as possible, he led his army through unfrequented and snow-covered passes, descended upon Lochlinne and completely surprised Argyll and his army. To Alasdair MacDonald, as Major-General, the leadership in the actual fighting fell; indeed, in local tradition Montrose is not mentioned as being in the engagements at all. The onset was vehement: the Covenanting army was almost annihilated: the pursuit was more dreadful than the battle. Argyll, with his usual caution, had taken refuge on his galley before the fight began, leaving the army in charge of his cousin, Achnambreac, who was taken prisoner. When brought before Alasdair, the Campbell general was roughly asked what death he would prefer. Achnambreac

LOCH TRALAIG AND BRAES OF LORN.

spoke of his relationship to MacDonald. Alasdair replied: "I do not doubt that you are my uncle, but would you rather die by sword or rope?" "*'S truagh mi fhein*," replied Achnambreac, "*dà dhiù gun aon roghainn*" ("Woe is me, two evils and one choice"), a saying which has become proverbial. MacDonald thereupon drew his sword and killed him. This is probably the Campbell version of the story. According to another version Alasdair was most anxious to save his uncle, and after the battle enquired of the leader of the Irish contingent, a Major Manus MacNamara, if any one knew aught of his relative. Manus replied: "*Tha e air an raon 'ud thall, 's e thar os a chionn, 's feuch an d'thoir thusa beò e*" ("He is on yonder field with his back to the ground, see if you can bring him to life"). The battle was fought on 2nd February 1645.

MacDonald fought subsequently along with Montrose in the siege and sack of Dundee, the battles of Auldearn and Alford, and the crowning victory of Kilsyth, which laid all Scotland at the feet of Montrose. At this battle, so great was the carnage, that of six thousand Covenanting foot, not more than one hundred, it is said, escaped with their lives. In the retreat, Argyll, who was present as one of the Committee of Estates, "never looked over his shoulder," says Guthrie, "until, after twenty miles' hard riding, he reached the South Queensferry, where he possessed himself of a boat *again*." Wishart sarcastically refers to the same circumstance, "and it is evident that the Marquis's fondness for an ark of safety had become a bye-word."

Alasdair MacDonald was knighted after this battle.

Montrose was now paramount in Scotland, but a sad disappointment awaited him, for shortly thereafter MacDonald and the Highlanders returned home with their booty. The former, unable to sacrifice his private inclination for the good of a cause, proceeded to satiate his feelings of animosity in further harassing and, if possible, exterminating the Campbells. He held out in Argyllshire for two years, but the cautious and indefatigable Leslie was now on his track, and MacDonald for the last time rallied his troops around him. The spot chosen for rendezvous was near the south end of Loch Awe, and on striking the pole of his standard into the ground a silver piece of money was thrown out of the soil. Alasdair asked the name of the place, and was told it was Goc am go. He now remembered the prediction of his nurse: "All will go well with you until you fix your standard at Goc am go, and the place you will know by a piece of money leaping from the ground as you plant your flagstaff." He was now seized with superstitious terror and incontinently fled to Ireland, making no attempt to defend the passes into Kintyre, and leaving his men to the tender mercies of the Covenanting army. Three hundred of his best troops were left to defend the Castle of Dunaverty at the Mull of Kintyre. After a lengthy siege, the castle, which had no proper water supply, surrendered; and, at the instigation of a Presbyterian minister of the name of Neaves, the garrison were massacred in cold blood. Three

IN GLENGALLAN.

people escaped this fate, MacDougall of Kilmun in Lorn, and an infant, saved through the compassion of a Campbell who cut off a piece of his tartan plaid and wrapped it round the child, whose nurse was thus enabled to pass through Leslie's lines.

Shortly afterwards Sir Alexander MacDonald was killed in an obscure fight in Ireland.

The public road from Melfort, emerging from the pass, skirts the side of the River Oude for some miles, and at Blaran the entrance to the Corrie of Lorn is passed. A lonely mountain lake, Loch Tralaig, from which the Oude takes its rise, occupies the basin of the glen: the sloping hills surrounding it are known as the Braes of Lorn. From Blaran the road rapidly descends through a delightfully wooded ravine, called Glengallan, to the valley of Euchar, occupied by a river of the same name, which, after a meandering course of 3 miles, enters the sea at Kilninver, close to the mouth of Loch Feochan.

Glen Euchar presents excellent examples of river terracing. It is a debated question whether the successive falls in the level of the river were caused by a corresponding elevation in the coast-line or by a progressive diminution in the size of the river due to altered meteorological or climatic conditions, such as oscillations in rainfall or the retreat of glaciers. Probably in this case we have a glacier-worn valley filled up by the detritus of the diluvial period, the river

thereafter, with the retreat of the ice and from other causes, assuming successively smaller proportions, each period being marked by a deposit of alluvium during floods on its banks, forming the flat terraces in question, the process being repeated as fresh, deeper, and more contracted channels were cut. In Glen Euchar three distinct terraces are to be noted: the middle one is broad enough to be cultivated, and on one of the fields the old mansion-house of Reray is built. The Euchar affords good salmon fishing, the fish travelling upwards to the spawning-ground in Loch Scammadal. At one time, indeed until very recently, the farmers of the glens provided themselves with a winter's supply of salmon from the pools of the river, by the aid of torch and spear. The fish, often of great size, were cut up, and salted in barrels, and, being a staple article of food during the winter, were not considered much of a delicacy. The rivers are now more carefully watched, so that, if the practice still persists, it is carried out with such precautions as to render discovery improbable.

At Kilninver the road divides, one branch passing along the east side of Loch Feochan to Oban; the other, up the steep gradient known as Bealach 'n Daimh Dhuinn (the Pass of the Brown Stirk) or Kilninver Brae to the Easdale district. From the top of this brae a good view of the hills of Mid and Upper Lorn is got. Among the peaks visible are Deadh Choimhead (the Pleasant Prospect), the twin peaks of Cru-

LOWER END OF LOCH FEOCHAN AND HILLS OF MULL.

achan, Ben Starbh (the Stalwart Ben) at the head of Loch Etive, Bidean nam Bian (the Peak of the Pelts), the highest mountain in Argyllshire, Buachaill' Eite (the Herd of Etive), and many others.

About a mile from Kilninver on the shores of Loch Feochan, quite close to the public road, there is a natural pier of rock, where vessels discharge cargoes of coal and other material for the use of the farmers of the glens: the rock is known as Creag na Marbh (the Rock of the Dead). Fifty yards from the shore the remains of what must have been a huge heap of stones, known as Carn Alpin, still withstand the tides and waves. Alpin was a great warrior King of the Scots, and father of Kenneth, the reputed conqueror of the Picts and the founder of the undivided Scottish monarchy. The district round about Kilninver appears to have been the scene of much of the strife betwixt the rival houses of Fergus and Loärn for the overlordship of Dalriada; thus we hear of the fight at Rossfoichne (*congressio* Irroisfoichne), the promontory of Feochan, between those tribes, and again of the battle of Finaglen (A.D. 719) at the head of Glen Euchar, between Ainbhceallaig and Sealbach, two brothers of the house of Loärn, for the chiefship of the race, in which the former was slain. The battle is remembered as Cath Fhionnaghleann or Blar nam Braithrean (the Battle of the Brothers). The little nation, probably in consequence of these internecine struggles, had much to do to protect itself from

the warlike Picts and Britons; but we find it clinging tenaciously to the shores and islands, growing slowly, not by immigration from the parent country, but by its own natural increase, a growth which hardened and educated, which engrained a spirit of caution and self-reliance still characteristic of the descendants. It was not for many centuries after its establishment in Argyll that it found itself powerful enough to make a decisive move across the Ridge of Alban (A.D. 844), then its progress was rapid. Coming like a flash out of the darkness of those days, we hear of the king transferring his seat from Lorn to Forteviot and Scone, and in a few years afterwards becoming the undisputed lord of much of what is now modern Scotland. But still the veneration for their homeland was such that, however afar they met their death, the bodies of the princes were carried slowly and reverently across the borders of Argyll, and through their beloved Lorn to the place of embarkation on the shores of Loch Feochan, where, at Creag na Marbh, the galley awaited the remains for removal to Iona; and where, to this day, stands the lonely cairn amidst the waters in memory of the Royal Race of Alpin and Fergus, a race which in unbroken succession is represented to-day by our gracious sovereign King Edward. As Father Innes, the historian, wrote: "From King Fergus the Second, son of Erc, till James the VI., the last of our kings who resided in Scotland, and the first of Great Britain, we have 63 kings hereditarily succeeding

THE TOAD OF LORN: A BASALTIC ESCARPMENT.

one another during the space of 1100 years, which is a greater antiquity than any hereditary monarch in Europe of one uninterrupted race can pretend to."

The entrance to Loch Feochan from the Firth of Lorn is between Rudha nam Boghanan (the Promontory of the Reefs) near the Toad of Lorn, and Minard Point, the southern extremity of Kilbride parish. On each of these headlands we find a specimen of the "curvilinear" fort. One of these, Dùn Mhic Rhaoul, is in a fair state of preservation; it is built upon the top of a tower-shaped rock 30 feet high, rising from a broad terrace 40 feet above the sea. The building is roughly quadrangular; and access was given to the fort, from the landward side only, by a slope or glacis, which was defended by two outer ramparts of stone. There are traces of a circular building inside the walls, probably the foundation of a hut-dwelling, similar to those found in Dùnchonail.

Hut circles are found in many places apart from the interior of forts, generally upon the slope of a hill facing the warmer aspects. They were, for purposes of defence, segregated into little village communities; but occasionally we find a solitary hut circle in the most lonely place; an example is found at the summit of the pass known as Bealach 'n daimh dhuinn. Its isolated position gave rise to the tradition that here was an ambush for unwary travellers; hence the name by which it was known—Leaba fhalach (the Bed of Spying): and in all probability the circular depression

in question may have been used as such, ages after the superstructure of turf and wattle had disappeared; while its position, commanding the passes on both sides of the ridge, made it very suitable for the purpose.

Until a few years ago, a large "standing-stone" stood upon the alluvial flats formed at the entrance of the Euchar into Loch Feochan; the gradual alteration in the course of the river led to its downfall. We do not know what was the special significance of these monuments of a distant age; they may be tombstone or cenotaph, or commemorative of some great event in the history of the tribes; or more likely have had some connection with the mysteries of their religion. We have already referred to the association of this district with the funeral processions of the early Scottish kings, and half a mile from the mouth of the Euchar, on the Melfort road, there is a steep defile whose name, Bealach an t-sleuch-daich (the Pass of Prostration), refers, in all likelihood, to some ceremonial in connection with burial customs or worship. Or it may be that here, where the traveller from the interior gets a first glimpse of the outlet of Loch Feochan and the great sea beyond, the primitive inhabitants were in the habit of prostrating themselves in adoration and prayer before that element which in all—and much more in the untutored minds of a simple folk—gives rise to feelings of awe and reverence; and ideas of indefinable mystery. The same place-name is attached to a defile in the hills betwixt Inveraray and Cladich;

LOCH LEOCHAN.

and a cross, lately removed — the Cross of Prostration — marked the spot where the glorious expanse of Loch Awe, with its inset of verdant islands, Innistrynich and Innishail—the Hesperides of ancient Celtic mythology—bursts into view.

The scenery around Loch Feochan is very attractive. Half a mile from the entrance the loch trends sharply to the left, and continues in a north-easterly direction for the remaining four miles of its length. On the west side, the peninsular part of Kilbride parish presents a typical example of the terraced, volcanic hills of Lorn; on the east the slopes are dotted with plantations of larch mottled with the darker colour of spruce and other evergreens, with occasional stretches of natural growth in which the birch and rowan predominate. Towards the head of the loch, the valley widens, and an expanse of broad pastures and cultivated fields, sheltered by belts of trees, interposes between the loch and the engirdling hills. Through the flat meadow-land the rivers Nell and Feochan pursue a serpentine course. From Kilmore, the pleasant hamlet occupying the centre of the landscape, four natural lines of communication radiate between the mountain spurs: the main-road leads to the left to the town of Oban; another road passes along Loch Nell to Connel and up Glen Lonan to Taynuilt; a third passes through Glen Feochan over the Monadh Meadhonach (Mid Muir) to Taychreggan on Loch Awe-side; while the fourth—a mere bridle-path—leaves the loch-side at Balinoe, and passing over the col

between Glen Feochan and the upper reaches of Glen Euchar, descends along the Eas Ruadh (the Ruddy Waterfall) on Loch Scammadal. The road up Glen Euchar skirting Loch Scammadal deviates to the right by Bragleen, over the hills at Finaglen, across the String of Lorn, along Loch Avich to Portinsherrich ferry on Loch Awe. A century ago this was the principal line of communication between Netherlorn and the Low-country; and the district being then in point of population and industries quite as important as Mid-Lorn, it was proposed, after the passing of the Roads and Bridges Act in 1803, to construct a main line of road in this direction. People in those days thought little of a foot journey from Easdale to Glasgow, which an able-bodied man completed in one day; indeed, the story is told of a shepherd who accomplished the distance from Glasgow to Bunessan in the Ross of Mull in twenty hours, making use of the ferries then existing on Loch Long, Loch Fyne, and Loch Awe, and that between Ardencaple on Seil Island and Crogan in Mull. With the advent of steamer communication between Glasgow and the West Coast, the practice was discontinued; but until 1878, when the railway to Oban was completed, it was a common event for Netherlorn farmers who had estate business to transact to do the journey on foot, to and from Bealach, as Taymouth, the residence of Lord Breadalbane, is still called, a distance of 180 miles, in three days.

The best view of Loch Scammadal is got from Laganbeg,

LOCH SCAMMADAL.

a small shelf of arable land in the hills on the west side of the loch; and the climb imposed is amply compensated by the typically Highland valley scene displayed. If by further effort the summit of An Creachan (1,200 feet) is attained, the difficulties of the ascent increase the pleasure of the view we obtain from the top. The prospect, which is in a way similar to that got from many of the lower eminences in the district, attains its attractiveness by the proximity and proud pre-eminence of Cruachan. From here the Ben looks its best, its grand cone bursting heavenwards like the giant it is, dwarfing all its neighbours. The graceful contours of the plateau ridges, the sinuosities of the coast-line, the numerous silvery threads of sea, loch, and strait are enhanced in beauty by the greater height from which we see it all. The view from the topmost peak of a country, whence we can see a more or less uniform horizon, is apt to strike the perception as curious and interesting: we gaze upon a completed picture which leaves little to the imagination. It does not appeal to one so much as that which we now contemplate from an intermediate height, where one-fourth of the circumference is filled with towering hills striving to attain the zenith: the mind, comparing the beauty of the landscape unfolded below, pleasurably exaggerates the probabilities of the unknown scenery beyond the barriers.

At the head of Loch Scammadal is the small estate of Bragleen, once the property of a family of the name of

Campbell. This family was intimately associated with the history of the supposed loss and subsequent recovery of the Brooch of Lorn. The famous ornament was at one time the property of King Robert the Bruce. After the disastrous battle of Methven, the King was obliged to hide in the wilds of the West Highlands, where the MacDonalds of the Isles gave him protection. The MacDougalls of Lorn, however, whose chief, Alexander de Argadia, had married a daughter of that John of Badenoch, the Red Comyn, whom Bruce had slain in the Greyfriars church in Dumfries, were his implacable foes. They opposed Bruce with relentless animosity, and on one occasion at Dalrigh (the King's field), near Tyndrum, his party was assailed with such fury that he escaped with the greatest difficulty. During the retreat three MacDougalls waylaid him near Loch Dochart. Bruce, who doubtless was clad in armour, managed to slay the three, but left the brooch which bound his plaid in the dying grasp of one of the heroic Highlanders.

"Whence that brooch of burning gold,
That clasps the Chieftain's mantlefold,
Wrought and chased with rare device,
Studded fair with gems of price?

. . . . . .

"No! thy splendours nothing tell
Foreign art or faëry spell,
Moulded thou for monarch's use
By the overweening Bruce,

LOCH AVICH.

When the royal robe he tied
O'er a heart of wrath and pride;
Thence in triumph wert thou torn
By the victor hand of Lorn!"

—Scott, *The Lord of the Isles.*

For centuries thereafter the brooch remained a priceless possession in the hands of the MacDougall family. Bruce, when securely seated upon the Scottish throne, visited the lands of the MacDougalls with fire and sword, besieged and took their principal stronghold of Dunstaffnage, which he placed in charge of "an individual of the name of Campbell," who was installed there as Royal Constable. The lands of Alexander de Argadia were forfeited and bestowed upon the already powerful family of MacDonald, whose leader, Angus Og, had remained the loyal supporter of the King during the great struggle for the independence of Scotland. John de Argadia, having married a niece of the King's, regained possession of much of his father's property in the reign of David II., who desired, before entering upon his unfortunate war with England, to conciliate this powerful family. Of this marriage there was an only child, who as heiress carried Lorn Proper, with the exception of the old Dunolly estate, which reverted to a collateral branch, to her husband Robert Stewart, who afterwards sold the lordship of Lorn to his brother, John Stewart of Innermeath. In the third generation the estate was bequeathed to the three daughters of the last Stewart Lord of Lorn, through whose marriages the

ancient patrimony of the MacDougalls passed into the hands of their hereditary enemies the Campbells of Lochaw and Breadalbane. It is from this connection that the latter family, and many others of the name of Campbell, bear upon their coats armorial the "fess chequy" of the Stewarts. The MacDougalls of Dunolly continued to enjoy the small territory left them until the rising of 1715, "when the representative incurred the penalty of forfeiture for his accession to the insurrection of that period; thus losing the remains of his inheritance to replace upon the throne the descendants of those princes whose accession his ancestors had opposed at the expense of their feudal grandeur." The estate was, however, restored in 1745.

It is related that after the defeat of Montrose, and the ruin thereby of Royalist hope in Scotland, the Scottish Parliament sent an expedition under Colonel Montgomery to besiege the MacDougall strongholds. Dunolly successfully resisted attack, but Gylen Castle in the island of Kerrara was sacked and burned. Among the treasures of the castle was the Brooch of Lorn, and it was supposed that the famous heirloom was destroyed by fire: the MacDougalls preferring to believe this, than that the jewel had fallen into the hands of their enemies. The Campbells of Bragleen, whose ancestor of Inverawe had taken a principal part in the siege of Gylen, made no mention of their possession of the Brooch until one hundred and seventy years afterwards, when under the will

of the Laird of Bragleen it was sent to a firm of auctioneers in London to be sold, and the proceeds divided among the testator's family. It is said that the Prince Regent made an offer; but eventually it was bought by Lieutenant-General Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochnell, who, in 1826, presented it to his friend and neighbour, the late Admiral MacDougall of MacDougall, the representative of its ancient possessors.

Whether or not the Brooch so recovered is the Bruce's Brooch is open to doubt. It is more likely that it is of much later date, probably the early fifteenth century. It belongs to the class known as Reliquary brooches, which contained below the dome-shaped centre a small cavity in which a relic of a saint or other religious token was kept. Its workmanship is not of the best Celtic character, but of a somewhat depraved type. The Lochbuie Brooch, figured by Pennant, and the Brooch of Ugadal are of the same class. The latter, a beautiful reproduction of which may be seen in the Scottish Museum of Antiquities, is also said to be a gift from Bruce to Mackay, the ancestor of the Ugadal family.

CHAPTER X

KILMARTIN

"Am fear a bhios fad' aig an aisig, gheibh e thairis uaireigin."

—Gaelic Proverb.

The watershed between Loch Awe and the Atlantic runs along a ridge of moorland known as the String of Lorn (Sreang Lathurnach). From a little lake known as Loch na Sreinge the Bragleen river emerges, and passing down the glen to Loch Scammadal, is joined at Finaglen by Allt an Ath' Dheirg (the Stream of the Red Ford), which rises on the shoulder of Beinn a Chapul, the highest of the Netherlorn hills. About 1294, the MacDougalls of Lorn had a dispute with the Campbells of Lochow regarding the marches between their lands. With the object of arriving at a peaceable understanding it was agreed that the disputants should meet at a burn flowing into Loch na Sreinge, still known as Allt a' Chomhlachaidh (the Stream of the Conference), and settle the exact boundary; the String of Lorn being roughly the line of division. The MacDougalls, principally from Netherlorn, when on their way to the meeting, halted beside Loch Scammadal, to confer as to the

LOCH-NA-SREINGE.

procedure to be adopted at the meeting; and when divining by means of a magic crystal the probable issue of a conflict, the charm was spirited out of the seer's hand and lost in the loch. Discouraged at the auspices, the MacDougalls of Reray returned home, and the remainder, in no good humour, proceeded up the glen to meet their rivals. The Campbells, who by the defection in their opponents' ranks now outnumbered them, had arrived at the place selected at the appointed time, and, taking the non-appearance of the enemy as a forfeiture of the MacDougall claims, proceeded down the glen into hostile territory. The forces met at Ath Dearg, and, with little preliminary in the way of debate, a mortal combat began. The MacDougalls, hopeless of the result, fought to die; while the Campbells, not anticipating a battle at the moment and too confident in their numbers, neglected good generalship. A Netherlorn scout, who managed to work his way behind a boulder (Carn Chailein, the Cairn of Colin) on the flank of the Campbells, shot an arrow, which transfixed Cailein Mòr, the Campbell chief, killing him on the spot. This stroke of fortune saved the MacDougall army from destruction, but such was their loss that it is said the river ran red, and the bed of the stream was choked by dead bodies: hence the name—Ath Dearg (Red Ford). The Campbells retired, carrying the body of their chief, which was interred at Kilchrenan on Loch Aweside. The late Duke of Argyll erected a

monument with a suitable inscription over the grave of his ancestor.

It is from Cailein Mòr, or as he is still called, Cailein Mòr na Sreinge (Great Colin of the String of Lorn), that the Dukes of Argyll derive their patronymic, MacCailein: a title corrupted into MacCallum Mòr (the son of great Malcolm), a corruption for which Sir Walter Scott is chiefly responsible.

Crossing the String of Lorn, the road descends by Loch Avich into the valley of Loch Awe, thence skirting the west side of the Loch to Ford it runs through the Vale of Ederline and the pass of Craiginterve (Creag 'n Tairbh, the Rock of the Bull), to join the main road from Lochgilphead to Oban at Kilmartin. The scenery of this part of Loch Awe, though pleasant, has not the rugged and romantic beauty which the towering hills, and deep glens and passes confer upon that of the north. The rounded, smooth outlines of the hills, the mammillated forms of the rocks and islets, and the deep ruts and scratches, show the influence of the ice-sheet. The glacier flow was in a south-west direction, along the valley of the loch, across Kilmartin towards the Sound of Jura. There can be no doubt that until comparatively recent geologic time the outlet for the waters of the Awe Valley and the deep glens—Glen Strae, Glen Orchy, and Glen Lochy—at the head of the loch was in this direction, and in the River Add (Flumen Longum, Abhuinn Fhada) and Kilmartin Burn we find the relict of that dis-

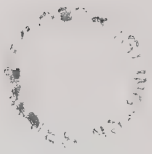
KILMARTIN.

charge. The line of weakness which aided the forces of denudation to determine the direction of this longitudinal valley was probably a continuation of that great fault which, traced from the upper part of Strathspey, passes in a straight line through Loch Ericht and Loch Lydoch to the eastern corrie of Cruachan, and which in all likelihood is continued along the Awe valley, through Loch Crinan to Loch Tarbert in Jura. The present configuration of Loch Awe and the cutting of the outlet at the north end along the Pass of Brander were events of the glacial and subsequent periods. How the later outlet was formed is matter for conjecture; but as Sir Archibald Geikie says, "it is another example of a watershed cut through by streams which flow in opposite directions, aided doubtless both by the sea and by the stream of ice that came down from the mountains and pressed through every available outlet to the ocean."

Entering the Strath of Kilmartin by the road from Loch Aweside, we come upon a scene of rural beauty and a district of great interest. The old name was Strathmore of *Ariskeodnish*; a title the meaning of which it is difficult to determine, but which may be translated as "the territory of the Scots." It was here that the earliest settlements of the Scottish adventurers were made; and Dunadd rock, rising like a fortress 170 feet above the level of the plain, was the early capital of the kingdom. The valley is studded with cairns, megaliths, inscribed stones, forts, and other monuments

of antiquity. The number of these is but a tithe of what existed two centuries ago: old men alive at the beginning of last century spoke of more than a score of cairns and many standing stones being removed to make room for the plough, or to build dykes and form steadings. Some fine specimens of pottery and of bronze urns were recovered from the demolished cairns, and placed for safe keeping in Poltalloch House. It was at this period, that is during the eighteenth century, that improved methods of agriculture were being introduced; any obstacle which interfered with the path of the plough was ruthlessly destroyed; and cairns, large standing stones, or other pre-historic erections which afforded a suitable quarry for stone for building byres, barns, or dwellings were barbarously removed. It was Vandalism of this thoughtless type which caused the destruction in 1743 of Arthur's Oon, the supposed *Templum Termini*, near Stonehouse, a most remarkable relic, noticed by Nennius in the early years of the seventh century. Similarly the Stone of Odin, near Loch Stennis in Orkney, after having survived the waste of centuries, "until it had nearly outlived the traditionary remembrance of the strange rites with which it had once been associated," was destroyed by a farmer in the year 1814: and it is said that had it not been for the interference of the eminent historian Malcolm Laing the whole of the world-famed group of Stennis would have been treated in like manner. In the case of Kilmartin, the

POLTALLOCH HOUSE.



almost complete extirpation of the native race during the Montrose wars, the civil discords preceding the Revolution of 1688, and the colonisation of the district, through Lowland immigration, by a people who did not possess the traditionary reverence of the Celt for the monuments of shadowy heroes and early religion, but who probably looked upon these as vestiges of idolatry, would account for the wholesale removal.

The best view of the Strathmore of Ariskeodnish is got from Carnasarie Castle, an imposing ruin situated at the apex of the fork of hills which flanks the valley. The castle is in the form of an oblong hall with stepped gables, tall chimneys and turrets; the walls are thick, with stairs and cubicles in the thickness: a plain, substantial building with little attempt at ornamentation, except the presence of a stone with armorial bearings, and ornamental tracing above the door. The present building was built on the site of an older one by John Carswell, Bishop of Argyll. In the old castle Carswell was born about the beginning of the sixteenth century, his father having been Constable of Carnasarie for the Earl of Argyll. John Carswell was one of the most eminent men the Highlands has produced, and his name is well worthy of being held in reverence by a race for whom he translated, and had published in Edinburgh, on the 24th day of April 1567, a Gaelic edition of the book known as John Knox's Liturgy: the first book printed in Gaelic or, indeed, in any Celtic tongue. This book contained a com-

pendium of the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church, and was, during the seventy years following, practically the only spiritual guide which the Highlanders of Argyll and the Isles possessed. After the first flame of enthusiasm among the Reformers had subsided, the loss of revenue, due to the spoliation of the estates of the older church and other causes, made the supply of ministers difficult to obtain. It was not until the ardour inspired by the Covenant had revived the interest of the people in religious affairs, that an attempt was made to give a proper supply of clergymen to these parishes; and it was during this interval that Carswell's publication proved of inestimable value to the Gaelic-speaking Protestant of Scotland.

Of this book there are only three copies in existence: an almost perfect copy is carefully treasured in Inverary Castle; the second, but imperfect one, is in the Library of Edinburgh University; and the third, also imperfect, in the British Museum.

Carswell performed the work well, considering the fact that he was unacquainted with the literature of the Gael, then abundant in MSS., as he himself states: "If any learned man finds faults in this writing or composing of this little book, let him excuse me, for I never acquired any knowledge of the Gaelic except as of the people generally"; and that it was a labour of love and devotion, and not for vainglory, we may well believe. In his dedicatory epistle he writes to

CARNASARIE CASTLE.

the following effect: "If I saw any man of the Gael of Alban or Eirind that should undertake, in aid of the Church of God, to translate this book into the Gaelic language, in which men could understand it, it would be very grateful to me, and I would not undertake the work; but since none such has been found, or if there be, I do not know him, who will undertake it out of love to God and to the Church, with more ability than my means and my power can bring to it, I hope that God will aid me in my defects and ignorance"; a humble and, as it has been remarked, a very unnecessary apology.

Carswell received his training for the priesthood in St Andrews, taking the degree of M.A. there in 1544; but after serving as rector of his native parish, and, subsequently, as Chancellor of the Chapel Royal at Stirling, he was in 1560, after the Reformation in Scotland had become an accomplished fact, appointed Superintendent of Argyll. The duties of superintendents were much the same as those of bishops — to create new charges, to visit churches and schools, to suspend or deprive ministers, to confer benefices, and to eradicate all monuments of idolatry in the bounds assigned them. It is very probable that Carswell, who was deeply attached to Queen Mary and her cause, had strong leanings towards the old religion. We find him in 1566 appointed by the Queen to the temporality of the Bishopric of Argyll and the Isles, and the Abbey of Iona. He was never consecrated, however;

and although rebuked in the Assembly for accepting the appointment, he remained Titular Bishop until the end of his days. The enormous extent of his diocese imposed a vast amount of labour upon the good bishop, but he was a man of herculean frame and iron endurance: he was known as "An Carsalach Mòr" (the Big Carswell). The income derived by the bishop in those days would consist, besides money, of many exactions in kind from the parishioners in the neighbourhood of the castle; and the payment of tithes in the shape of eggs, butter, chickens, and other farm produce caused much irritation amongst the good wives of the strath; grumbling which found expression, still surviving, in the following lampoon:—

"*An Carsalach mòr* tha 'n Carnasarie,
Tha na coig cairt 'n a osain,
Tha dhroll mar dhruinnin na corra,
'S a sgròban lom, gionach, farsuing."

(The Big Carswell in Carnasarie, There are five quarters (45 inches) in his hose, His rump is like the back of a crane, His stomach empty, greedy, and *unfortunately* capacious).

After his censure by the Assembly, Carswell withdrew from Court and retired to Carnasarie, where he died in the year 1572. He was buried, by his own desire, at the Priory of Ardchattan. The leaden coffin lies below the floor of the kitchen of the present mansion-house, which was, with a spirit of desecration hard to excuse, built over a part of the old graveyard. Such was the weight of the coffin, the

CASCADE NEAR SALACHARY.

violence of the storm which prevailed on the funeral day, and the consequent hardships endured by the mourners, that a saying is still current when any extraordinary event happens, "*Cha d 'thainig a leithid bho latha adhlaic a Charsalaich*" ("There has not been the like since Carswell's funeral day").

Our rude sketch of Netherlorn and its neighbourhood is ended. Of a country where every hill and hollow, every loch and river, every skerry and bay has its name and history; of a country replete with legend and tradition, much more might be told. It might be that something should be said of the people and their characteristics, but how can one, to whom they are kith and kin, do so: he may see their merits and demerits, but through the haze of affection. They are a kindly race, with many of the characteristics of a primitive folk, suspicious of strangers, but hospitable, and once their confidence has been secured, frank and genial; slightly tinged with Celtic gloom, the outcome of a religion ill-suited to the Celt, but ardent devotees of Presbyterianism withal. I think the ancient faith, a ritualistic one, was best adapted to the temperament of the Gael, and that his Presbyterianism is impregnated with faults of the older religion. If he does not reverence saints and images, his worship is still a worship of idols: a worship of the *Word* and the *Roll*. This declension is the result of his innate conservatism; it is the cause of an intolerance — far too prevalent—of the lighter vein of human

nature, of an aversion to the amusements, music — nay, even to the language of his forefathers. Yet notwithstanding the effects during the last century of the tyranny of church and of land laws, a truly national spirit is uprising, a spirit which awakens within the Gael the feeling that his salvation as a race, and as a useful and in many ways unique component of the British Empire, is by development of his own good points, by development from within, and not by the imposition upon him of an alien culture which makes him at best but a sorry imitation of his protagonist.

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